

TEFL Practices

Scenarios for Research and Reflection

Compilation by
Yomaira Angélica Herreño-Contreras



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Herreño Contreras, Yomaira Angélica

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Content

FOREWORD	13
Anderson Alexander Avellaneda Barreto	
INTRODUCTION	15
Yomaira Angélica Herreño-Contreras	
PERCEPTIONS OF MEXICAN EFL TEACHERS TOWARDS STUDENTS’ DIGITAL LITERACY AND AUTONOMY IN 2020	21
Araceli Salas	
THE GOLDEN DUO OF HIGHER EDUCATION: ICTs AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS	35
Claudia Bibiana Ruiz	
KAHOOT AND QUIZZ, ALTERNATIVES USING SMARTPHONES FOR EFL CLASSROOMS	49
Daisy Lorena Narváez-Cantos	
PRACTICING AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION AS THE KEY TO BALANCE THE ENGLISH SKILLS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM	63
Marien Monroy Fajardo	
HYPERDOCS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING, BUILDING AUTONOMY IN LEARNERS WHILE RECOGNIZING THEIR HUMANNES	69
Carolina Rodríguez-Buitrago	

TOWARD CRITICAL THINKING IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: REFLECTION TO EMPOWER TEACHERS AND LEARNERS Alba Juliana Tiuso Hernández	87
ENGLISH FOR SIGNIFICANT PURPOSES AS A SCENARIO TO EDUCATE FOR CITIZENSHIP Yomaira Angélica Herreño-Contreras	97
I DARE YOU TO ACCEPT THE 'VOCABULARY CHALLENGE' Jenny Mariana González Cárdenas	113

Index of Figures and Tables

Figure 1.1 Fostering autonomy in lei: the participants' recommendations.	29
Figure 2.1 Gender selection	39
Figure 2.2 Level of teaching selection	40
Figure 2.3 Teaching experience	41
Figure 2.4 Online teaching before COVID-19	41
Figure 2.5 100% online classes	42
Figure 3.1 Smartphone use for academic purposes	52
Figure 5.1 Grammar HyperDoc 1 - 20192, Present tenses review slidedeck	76
Figure 7.1 21st century skills	100
Figure 7.2. Higher order thinking skills	101
Figure 7.3 Pedagogical cycle	105
Figure 7.4 Connecting and relating ideas	106
Figure 7.5 Listening comprehension	107

Figure 8.1 Personal file. Screenshot activity “Word cloud poll everywhere”. Phase 1	116
Figure 8.2 Personal file. Screenshot students’ activity “Word art”. Phase 1	117
Figure 8.3 Personal file. Screenshot students’ activity “Word art”. Phase 1	118
Figure 8.4 Personal file. Screenshot students’ activity “Hangman”. Phase 3	119
Figure 8.5 Screenshot worksheet “Amnesty death penalty report.” Phase 3	121
Figure 8.6 Personal file. Screenshot kahoot activity “How much do you know about criminal law?” Phase 4	122
Figure 8.7 Personal file. Screenshot “Crossword law-crime”. Phase 4	123
Figure 8.8 Personal file. Screenshot “Crossword law-crime”. Phase 4	123
Figure 8.9 Personal File. Screenshot edpuzzle activity “Crime and social problems”. Phase 4	124
Figure 8.10 Personal file. Screenshot compilation of law vocabulary. Phase 5	125
Figure 8.11 Personal file. Screenshot teacher’s video tutorial. Phase 6	127
Figure 8.12 Personal file. Screenshot student’s video “Vocabulary Challenge Activity.” Phase 6	128

Table 1.1 Learner involvement and teachers' perceptions towards students' attitude	27
Table 2.1 Subjects	38
Table 5.1 A HyperDoc within a language class	76
Table 5.2 Virtues and attributes by Peterson and Seligman (2004)	81
Table 7.1 Features of an ESP lesson founded on communicative goals embedded with citizenship backbones	104
Table 7.2 Lesson details	105
Table 7.3 Illustrating	106
Table 8.1 Lesson details	114

Foreword

When does research in English language teaching have the greatest impact? Perhaps when it is thoroughly implemented in the classroom, or when it changes the teaching practices of several educators, or simply at all times when research is carried out in any given classroom setting. Some educators may argue that such impact is rather immeasurable, therefore only time will tell. And the legacy of those who dedicated years of their lives to observe, collect data, read, write, and publish their insights will most likely be unknown, at least in this lifetime.

However, I am a firm believer of the power of reading to change lives, and this is precisely why this book has the potential to shift the lives of many. None of the authors here decided to write just to be published and have a copy of this book in their shelves, neither the editor nor me had that sort of idea in mind when this publication was envisioned. The impact of research in English language teaching is greater when the insights are effectively read by more and more readers, after all in fiction and non-fiction the purpose of writing is to be read. In other words, authors do their hard work to reach out to those unknown friends they might never get to meet, also known as readers.

In the academic world, the number of books that go into the shelves of prestigious university libraries is tremendously vast and overwhelming, but unfortunately not all those books find their readers. I know for a fact that Yomaira Herreño, my dear colleague and editor in chief, made every endeavor to offer a reading experience for any person who would have the opportunity to lay hands on the final version of this project, actions that go beyond collecting articles for the edition of a new research book. Consequently, what the readers are about to find

here is a selection of collaborative works. It should be celebrated as well that the role of women in this process was predominant, not because the purpose of this volume was a feminist one, but because the circumstances created this convenient gathering of female researchers whose ideas are bound to start a wider conversation about ELT.

In the inside of this book, the readers will find the voices of female researchers from Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador. All from different backgrounds, with different systems of beliefs, but all of them with a passion for sharing their ideas. I had the delightful opportunity of working with some of them, and I commend the work they put into their lessons. As the only male voice in this publication, I have nothing but respect and the greatest admiration for all of them. I do feel honored to have been invited to do my bit in the foreword.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage all readers to enjoy the fascinating insights and reflections given by the authors on varied topics, such as: the effects of the pandemic on autonomous learning, and the role of digital tools in education, critical thinking, and vocabulary acquisition. Undoubtedly, this book TEFL practices: scenarios for research and reflection means that a conversation is about to start, a much needed one in education, and getting these collected articles published is merely the beginning of a long journey. Where will this quest take us? Only time will tell.

ANDERSON ALEXANDER AVELLANEDA BARRETO

Villavicencio, June 1st, 2021

Introduction

This compilatory book gives account of a series of topics that have become into inquiry endeavors, pedagogical challenges and research questions for a group of ELT women. In this sense, the reader will have the opportunity to delve into current challenges concerning Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

The identification of effective learning practices was a vital concern among English teachers during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This topic is presented by professor Araceli Salas, who conducted a research study at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (Mexico) so as to determine students' digital literacy and autonomy. Nonetheless, the pandemic also influenced teachers' methodology and in-class practices. Thus, Professor Claudia Bibiana Ruiz reflects on the golden binomial of education: ICTs¹ and university teachers, and draws attention to the relevance of teachers' experiences in the field of social studies, science and technology to understand the current digital gap and the effective incorporation of ICTs within educational settings. Her paper is the result of a qualitative study conducted with teachers from Universidad Santo Tomás, Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios and Universidad de Los Llanos in Villavicencio.

As technology grows as a key issue to facilitate language learning, Professor Daysi Lorena Nárvaez-Cantos explores how the use of some smartphone applications may influence the teaching-learning-assessment process. Her descriptive study portrays how mobile devices became learning allies among a sample of EFL learners from Universidad

1 Abbreviation for information and communications technologies.

de Cuenca, Ecuador. Apart from technological competences, language learning and teaching essentially involve nurturing communicative skills. In this regard, Professor Marien Monroy Fajardo displays an approach to foster listening skills in English. Based on her experience teaching English at Universidad Santo Tomás in Villavicencio, her paper aims at raising awareness of the practice of spoken words recognition in the EFL class as a strategy to aid students in improving listening comprehension.

TEFL has gradually moved from teacher-centered methodologies to student-centered methodologies as a manner of making the language learning process more effective and transcendental. In this concern, Professor Carolina Rodríguez-Buitrago provides the reader with an insight of HyperDocs, in order to develop self-regulation and promote better practices concerning planning, decision-making and problem-solving among pre-service teachers. She shares her experience flipping classes, building up autonomy and recognizing students' humanness at Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana. Despite of the fact that TEFL is mainly focused on the learners, teachers' perceptions and inquiries are not left aside. In this sense, Professor Alba Juliana Tiuso Hernández reflects on the power of reflective teaching and teachers' knowledge in the current state of the language-teaching field moving from a method era to a post-method era. Based on her teaching experience at Universidad Santo Tomás, she attempts to encourage teachers to construct their own practices bearing in mind the contextual factors and the constant reflection and analysis of their classes.

Concerning English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Professor Jenny Mariana González Cárdenas demonstrates how students' vocabulary issues may be tackled. She designed a vocabulary challenge lesson as a strategy to expand vocabulary in English related to professional fields. As a result of this sort of activity, students tended to become more active learners. Finally, ESP may also be considered as English for Significant Purposes. Thus, Professor Yomaira Angélica Herreño-Contreras proposes an approach to make the English classes scenarios to educate for citizenship. To do so, she suggests learning and teaching

paths including the embedment of three sorts of skills: communication, Higher Order Thinking (HOTS) and 21st century skills.

YOMAIRA ANGÉLICA HERREÑO-CONTRERAS

Villavicencio, July 2nd, 2021

Teaching English in pandemic times is a great challenge. Students have to study and live together with their families to avoid getting infected. We, teachers, had to adapt our lessons to cope with this situation. We, teachers, are learning different strategies and tools on the spur of the moment. At the same time, many people are suffering due to the COVID-19, which leads to emotions such as uncertainty, fear, and anxiety in my students. Therefore, I see my students with compassion, understanding, and English language teaching as the means to transform society.

ANGÉLICA TORRES OBANDO,

English Teacher, Universidad Santo Tomás-Villavicencio

Perceptions of Mexican EFL Teachers towards Students' Digital Literacy and Autonomy in 2020

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Introduction

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 will definitely be a year of reference in education as teachers have changed their practices. In this context, the study had the purpose to identify and explore the perceptions of a group of teacher-educators in an English Language Teaching (ELT) program towards students' digital literacy and autonomy during the Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in Mexico.

1 The author has a Ph.D. in Language Science and an M.A. in ELT. Dr. Salas is a professor/researcher in the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), México. She has been a speaker in local and international events and published several academic articles and book chapters in the field. Dr. Salas serves as the editor-in-chief of *Lenguas en Contexto* (BUAP) and as an associate editor of the *TESOL Journal* and the *MEXTESOL Journal*. She is involved in TESOL and is the current chair of the EFL-IS. Her research interests include teacher-education, ESP, discourse analysis and leadership in ELT.

Autonomy has been identified as a desirable trait as an autonomous learner “takes responsibility for their own learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 1). A more recent definition of autonomy comes from Campbell (1998), who suggests that autonomy is a talent and an innate power to solve things which improves and facilitates learning. On the other hand, digital literacy has been defined as a set of “practices of communicating, relating, thinking and ‘being’ associated with digital media”, in words of Jones and Hafner (2012, p. 13). These practices allow users of the digital media to use these resources for their benefit on their own. Much has been said about the new generations and their knowledge of technology, however, the situation has made evident that there is still room for improvement and change for language teachers and students regarding the development of learners’ digital literacy and autonomy.

The study took place at the end of the Spring Term 2020, during which teachers and students were sent home to continue the term. Many questions emerged for teachers and students regarding academic issues. Specifically, the study aimed to answer this research question: What were the perceptions of a group of teachers in the Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Inglés (LEI) towards learners’ digital literacy and autonomy during ERT?

The Context of the Study

The Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) is one of the biggest public universities in Mexico with a student population of over 60,000 learners and over 150 majors and postgraduate programs. BUAP proposes a university model which emphasizes students’ integral formation. The curriculum, based on the constructivist approach, has the purpose of leading students to a better and more autonomous learning during their studies in the institution.

The ELT major offered by BUAP, since 1984, is the Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Inglés. The purpose of the program is to form professionals who can teach English at all levels, from pre-school to public and private universities, or in other contexts, such as companies or private organizations.

Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT)

As in most places in the world, teachers and students in LEI in Mexico were expected to continue with the Spring Term 2020 from home. Technology and remote distance took the place of face-to-face instruction. Teaching during the pandemic has been coined as ERT, and Hodges et al. have defined the term as:

[...] a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances. It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face [...] and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated. (2020, par. 1)

Previous efforts had been made to make learning possible and available through technology in LEI, for example, designing blended learning courses or implementing platforms which could be used along with face-to-face courses. However, in March 2020, ERT took over as the only option for keeping instruction going in the middle of the virus spread with the hope of reaching everybody, even students who were not prepared to take their own learning under their control.

Learner Autonomy

“Learner autonomy has been a legitimate and desirable goal of language education”, Benson (2013, p. 2) affirms. Thornbury added that “autonomy is your capacity to take responsibility for, and control of your own learning, whether in an institutionalized context, or completely independent of a teacher or institution” (2005, p. 22). Successful language learning can be influenced by learner autonomy and progress can be determined by the learners’ control over their learning.

Technology has played a key role in the way instruction has been delivered. Additionally, 2020 has brought new challenges to teachers and learners in a way that nobody expected. As a result, teachers had to use technology. What some teachers had not done by themselves,

they did it for the sake of their students' learning faster than expected. However, not everybody has had a smooth transition. Teachers and learners have lived this situation in different levels of difficulty or even stress.

Suddenly, face-to-face interaction was interrupted and teachers and students had to stay home without a previous agreement on their subsequent meetings. This caused confusion among students. In the Mexican context, students are used to following teachers' instructions for all actions regarding their learning. This learner dependence became evident when students started publishing posts on social media looking for their teachers or seeking for help to contact their teachers.

On the other side, teachers were living the situation according to their own digital literacy. Although the use of technology had been encouraged in the School of Languages BUAP, for example, only some teachers were already using alternate platforms for their face-to-face classes. Suddenly, teachers and students were forced to exercise a certain level of autonomy from one day to the next due to the health crisis worldwide.

Learners' Digital Literacy

Once at home, learners were faced with the need to use digital resources and some of them realized that, after all, they were not that well prepared for it. According to the American Library Association's task force: "Digital literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills" (n. d.). It was evident that not all students had developed these skills effectively. Learners had not been previously instructed in how to use technology effectively as younger generations were considered to be knowledgeable on technology. Despite some truth in this claim, new generations have not had the need to use their digital skills for formal learning, as they have used technology primarily for communication and entertainment.

Teachers' Perceptions towards Pre-Service Teachers' Autonomy

McGrath (2000) has identified a relationship between the development of learner autonomy and teacher autonomy. If teachers want their learners to become autonomous, they should start by making their own decisions and looking at their responsibility as role models. For Fraser and Brown, these virtual bonds can result “in powerful forms of personal and social transformation” (2002, p. 200). Teachers can be significant figures for their learners in the process of becoming more autonomous, as role models are significant for learners (Clemente, 2001; Masouleh & Jooneghani, 2012). Therefore, their beliefs and perceptions can be relevant sources to monitor learners' learning and progress.

Methodology

When the Spring Term 2020 finished in June, the transition from face-to-face teaching to online instruction had happened without previous planning. It was an appropriate moment to ask teachers about their perceptions regarding the experiences they had lived during the term.

According to Yin (2013), a case study is defined as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary case within its real-life context and from different sources of evidence. Creswell and Poth identify the need for a case study when “it has an unusual interest and needs to be described and detailed” (2018, p. 98). The study originated in the researcher's own perceptions and triangulated with the participants views on ERT aimed at examining teachers' perceptions regarding their learners' digital literacy and autonomy during an unusual situation such as the pandemics.

Participants

The participants of the study were a group of eleven teachers from the ELT program in BUAP, Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Inglés. The

participants were all teaching when the pandemic spread in March 2020 and continued with their classes within the framework of ERT. The survey was answered by nine female teachers and two male teachers. Their ages were between 38 and 55 years old, and they all had been LEI professors for at least three years. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

Instrument

In order to collect the participants' perceptions, a brief questionnaire was designed and validated by peers of the same institution who answered it and made some comments on the questions. The instrument consisted of seven questions asking about the involvement of students, as well as their perceptions on learners' digital literacy and autonomy during the term which had just finished (see Appendix). The questionnaire was sent to the participants' e-mails and they answered the seven-question survey through Google Documents. The data provided by the teachers was used as a sample of teachers' experiences lived during the Spring Term 2020 in LEI. The analysis of the data was done by identifying key terms which became the categories explained in the following section.

Results

The results of the questionnaire were then organized according to the topics suggested by the researcher in the questionnaire and were taken from key terms in the participants' answers. The categories identified were: 1. Learners' level of involvement and teachers' perceptions on learners' attitudes during the pandemic; 2. Learners' digital skills for learning and learners' autonomy during the Spring Term 2020. They were also asked to give some recommendations to foster autonomy.

Learners' Level of Involvement and Teachers' Perceptions on Learners' Attitude

The results from the questionnaire made evident that the levels of learner involvement were very different for the participants. While most had a high percentage of learners' involvement, two had less than 50% learner involvement during ERT. Table 1 shows the percentage of learner involvement, their perceptions on the learners' attitudes during ERT, from March to June 2020.

Table 1.1 Learner involvement and teachers' perceptions towards students' attitude

Participants (pseudonyms)	% Learner involvement	Perceptions towards students' attitude
1. Laura	85%	Resilient and resigned
1. Susana	90%	Patient, optimistic, relaxed and positive
1. Rosy	90%	Good attitude, good response to classes
1. Lou	35%	Positive but they did not attend classes, just submitted tasks
1. Lalo	80%	Comfortable
1. Mariana	80%	Responsible
1. Miguel	80%	Good response from some, not from everybody
1. Karina	95%	Overwhelmed and then, resigned
1. Gina	75%	Positive
1. Teresa	80%	Curious and concerned
1. Sandra	30%	Reluctant to work, but submitted homework

Source: Own elaboration.

Teachers' Perceptions on Learners' Autonomy during the Spring Term 2020

Interestingly, most of the participants mentioned that LEI students were not autonomous. They expressed that learners could complete their tasks from home, but they needed the guidance of their teachers. These are some of their comments:

Susana- In my case, they are autonomous when the facilitator knows how to guide them. I can say that my students were very autonomous.

Rosy- They depend a lot from the teachers' instructions because they mainly stay with teachers' directions.

Lalo- I constantly encourage students to do things on their own, but they might not be ready yet. They were good at following instructions.

Miguel- They were not ready yet; some students were unable to work this way.

Teresa- They aren't that autonomous. They need the teacher to tell them what to do and how well they are doing it.

As seen from their answers, teachers in LEI's perceptions about autonomy were not positive. Some of them mentioned learners' responsibility as an element of autonomy. Some of the participants said that learners could finish the semester because teachers established directions or instructions, or they told learners what to do. Overall, it seems that LEI students were not ready for autonomy at the outbreak of COVID-19.

Learners' Digital Skills for Learning

It was through technology that the instructions could be kept during the pandemic. What the results showed was that LEI learners were not prepared to use technology for the purpose of learning in the opinion and perceptions of the participants. Some of the comments the participants made about the digital literacy of LEI learners were:

Laura- Learners relate technology to fun activities and social networks, not for education.

- Lalo-** *I'm sure they enjoy using technology to have fun, to learn, I'm not sure.*
- Miguel-** *Some students have problems when managing technology. There was a student who said "I cannot deal with so much technology."*
- Teresa-** *Some of them struggle not only to keep up with the classes and assignments but also to have access to internet.*
- Sandra-** *In this period, I think they didn't enjoy using technology, maybe in the future.*

Fostering autonomy in LEI

After stating that LEI students were not autonomous, the participants made some suggestions and recommendations on how to foster autonomy in LEI. Their comments were organized in the categories presented in Figure 1.

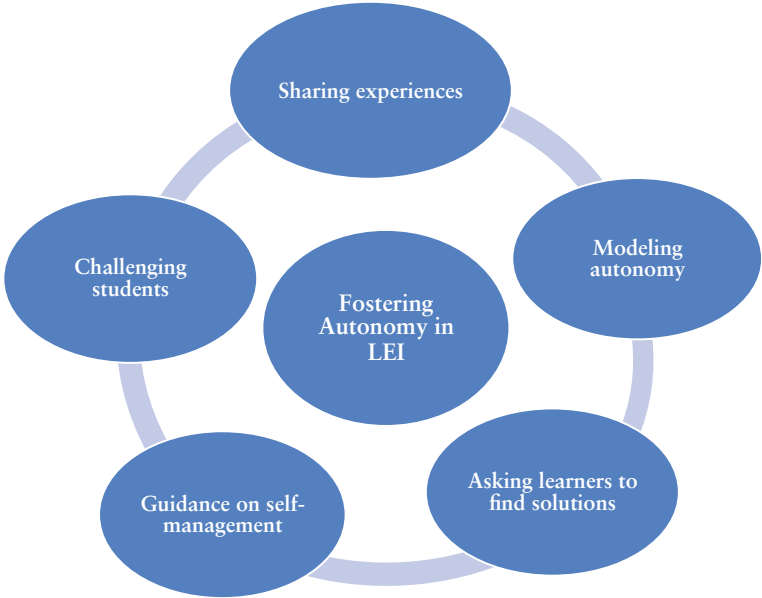


Figure 1.1 Fostering autonomy in LEI: the participants' recommendations
Source: Own elaboration.

The participants suggested the implementation of these activities in order to direct learners towards the development of autonomy and digital literacy.

Discussion

Results showed that the participants regularly interacted with their students during ERT and they could teach from home. They had a positive perception of their students' attitudes and involvement. In average, the percentage of learner involvement was 79.2% from March to June 2020.

Something interesting was the fact that the participants were not clear in defining learner autonomy. Autonomy does not mean following directions or instructions or meeting deadlines, it goes beyond learners' responsibility. Having a clear definition might allow teachers to provide an appropriate environment of freedom and choice, which might result in more effective learning. However, as Benson and Voller (2014) have claimed, the willingness and positive attitudes of learners to take initiative and of teachers to monitor progress are necessary.

Regarding the learners' digital literacy, the participants expressed that although learners made use of technology, their knowledge was limited to the use of social media and games. Participants recognized that LEI students were not autonomous and they made some suggestions in order to foster autonomy. Among their recommendations, they mentioned that modeling autonomy and problem solving could help learners when they face problems on their own, for example. Outside the classroom, the pandemic also evidenced the social inequality of the country. Some students could not continue with their classes because internet was not available where they were. Technology proved to be a tool, but not the solution for the problems caused by COVID-19 in education.

Conclusions

ERT emerged as an alternative for instruction at the outbreak of COVID-19. The effort made by teachers and students has proved to be helpful; additionally, some important issues have emerged within the context of an ELT program regarding learners' digital literacy and autonomy that can be found at a more global scope. In the context of the study of this chapter, the average involvement of learners was 79%, while some students were not able to follow the semester either because of their lack of access to internet or their level of digital literacy. Teachers' perceptions regarding learners' autonomy were not positive, they all agreed that students were not ready for autonomy. However, autonomous learners need autonomous teachers to be their role models and inspiration. Fostering learning autonomy in a country like Mexico may help learners develop freedom and confidence so that they might reach learning goals and make their learning more meaningful and effective.

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Appendix - The Instrument

The questionnaire

1. What subjects did you teach during Spring Term 2020?
2. What percentage of your LEI students get involved in online teaching?
3. How would you describe LEI students' attitudes during the Emergent Remote Teaching 2020 towards using technology?
4. Autonomy is part of the curriculum in BUAP, in your opinion, how autonomous were LEI students during the Spring Term 2020?
5. How do you think this experience has changed LEI pre-service teachers' perspectives towards their own teaching careers in the future?
6. After this experience, how could teachers foster autonomy in LEI students during the pandemic?
7. In your opinion, did LEI students enjoy using technology to learn during the Spring Term 2020?

The Golden Duo of Higher Education: ICTs and University Teachers

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Introduction

The use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has become a way of life for most teachers around the world. They are a functional tool that has greatly changed the way we interact with both people and information over time. Therefore, the educational strategy that results from the collaboration of ICTs with academic scenarios

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generates profound changes in the quality and equity offered by the university in today's world. It entails changes in the functions, roles and tasks assigned to teachers, requiring them to develop new skills in order to properly perform their professional duties (Torelló, 2011).

Although this document addressed an analysis based on the reality of the education crisis that we are currently facing due to the pandemic, the situation presented here has a more extensive future approach.

Problem statement

Each institution has undergone a different process regarding the incorporation of ICTs. Due to social and cultural demands and needs, managers and teachers have been forced to acquire technological devices and attempt a curricular integration between pedagogy, didactics and technology, without consideration and with little preparation (Buckingham, 2008). In this context, it is clear that the contemporary university has found the use of ICTs to continue academic activities and, thus, to be able to maintain technological, cultural and social processes without considering whether teachers have the knowledge and skills to use the required digital resources for these new technological and academic challenges that go beyond internet connectivity. This raises a question that is not related to research, but is potentially relevant and necessary: *Are we innovating in education or are we just digitizing traditional teaching?*

Technology alone does not represent a guidance; for this reason, the teacher's work is more important than ever, and also requires the development of digital skills and competencies that redefine the knowledge that they should have in the classroom. Knowledge is a new mental product generated thanks to "a process in which a cognitive subject (who knows) is related to an object of knowledge (that which is known)" (Martínez, 2011, p. 3). Therefore, in the educational field, it is possible to observe that the explorations, descriptions, explanations, interpretations or understandings of the phenomena, facts or pedagogical events are determined by the ontological, existing or real interests of the subjects who elaborate them from the use of technology in classrooms.

Literature review

In the last 20 years, different multilateral bodies with expertise in education issues, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005), have produced several reports where improvement strategies for higher education include the urgent need to incorporate ICTs. Although these issues have historically been proposed by international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO, and by some national ones, such as the Ministry of National Education, they do not appear so clear yet. The reality of the contemporary world is immersed in technological mediations in all contexts, where education is highly impacted:

As is the case for other sectors of the wider economy and society, education will need to come to terms with the new technologies. This could require substantial public and private sector investments in software research and development, purchase of hardware, and refurbishment of schools. It will be difficult for national policy-makers to resist finding the necessary resources, whatever their sensibilities for expenditure on education, although without international cooperation and assistance the poorest countries could fall still further behind. Parents and the public at large, in the industrial countries at least, are unlikely to accept for too long the notion that education should be less well equipped with the new technologies than other areas of social and economic activity. (UNESCO, 1998, pp. 19-20)

Parallel to this reality, the digital gap and the gender gap are visible in regions such as the Llanos Orientales or the Orinoquia, due to different technological, cultural and social characteristics. Therefore, if higher education institutions are challenged to use ICTs, teachers require a training period that allows them to face professional challenges where, among other things, “adaptation to the circumstances will force an open mind and information will circulate everywhere” (González Prieto, 2016, p. 26). These adaptations involve experiences

that will make it possible to understand the situations, benefits, barriers, challenges, gaps, resistances and impacts that this entails for university teachers.

Research methodology

The following paper is intended to reflect methodologically on the perceptions of university teachers through a qualitative analysis based on grounded theory methodology, which is a research method whose epistemological support lies in the link between a subject who seeks to understand an object to be investigated by means of “the actions and meanings of the participants in the research” (Charmaz, 2013, p. 272). This implies that the researcher “collects, encodes and analyzes data simultaneously” (Soneira, 2006, p. 155), but not successively. In this radical, the singularity of grounded theory is seen as a methodical, systematic and interpretive process, typical of the qualitative paradigm.

For the time being, the techniques used in this analysis were conducted in two stages. First, a survey of characterization and online teaching perceptions which, from a quantitative position based on positivism, seeks objectivity through quantification and measurement, with the aim of gaining generalization in the findings. With this, 95 teachers from Universidad Santo Tomás, Universidad Minuto de Dios and Universidad de Los Llanos settled in Villavicencio headquarters of five faculties. They were teachers who used ICTs in their classes, which include the following subjects:

Table 2.1 Subjects

Number of teachers	Faculty
25	Language Institute
25	Math and Basic Sciences
15	Education
15	Law
15	International Businesses and Accountancy

Source: Own elaboration.

In a second moment of exploration, from a qualitative standpoint, they sought to investigate “natural situations, trying to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people give to them” (Vasilachis, 2006, p. 24). Likewise, this second moment is interpretative since it gives value to the meanings that the subjects have about the object of knowledge, which can lead to the development of a concept, a model or a theory. To approach the socio-cultural environment of the teachers, two group interviews were accomplished with the participation of three teachers who had the willingness to participate in a deeper conversation (one from each university), whose ages ranged from 24 to 60. They all have a computer and internet access and they all use ICTs in the classroom; this could be interpreted as a first approach to the research problem.

The topics of this pilot analysis are relevant, since the crisis caused by COVID-19 reveals the need to include digital skills as part of teacher training and professional updating. To begin with, the survey, applied virtually through a Google Form, allowed the initial characterization of the participating teachers regarding their gender. Based on the results of the survey, it is clear that there are 32 men, 62 women and one person who preferred not to determine their gender. This is important and relevant, because the analysis displays a marked feminization of professions, which could be addressed from a gender equity perspective in the future (see Figure 2.1).

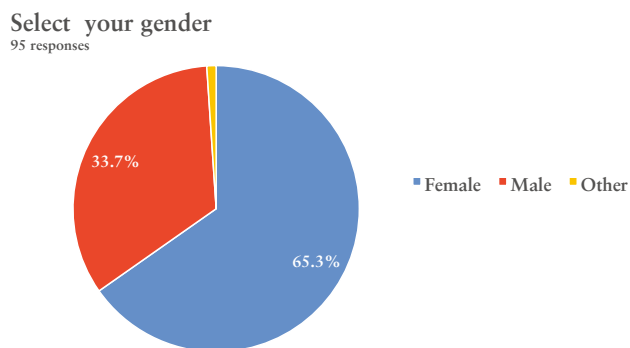


Figure 2.1 Gender selection

Source: Own elaboration.

In the multiplicity of teaching tasks that cut across teaching, research and administrative activities, there are also some specific features that could be addressed in an in-depth interview in the near future by taking a sample of three teachers for each section presented below and, thus, deepening into their experiences of incorporating and using ICTs (see Figure 2.2).

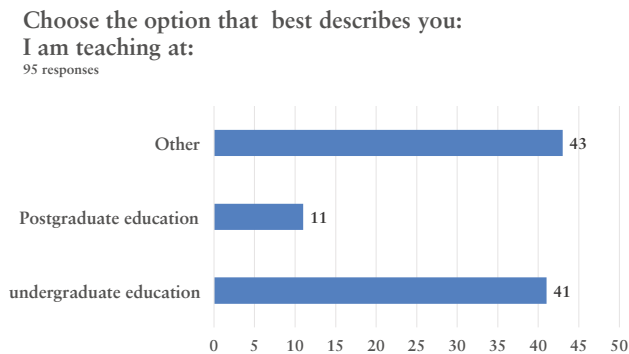


Figure 2.2 Level of teaching selection

Source: Own elaboration.

For the option “Other”, reference was made to being a teacher in the distance education unit that appeared to be unrelated to the other two options. Before the pandemic, they were distributed in these three ways, but because of the pandemic, now we simply speak of undergraduate and graduate education that seemed to be absorbed by the “Other” modality. This new finding came from the applied survey and it could be considered for the future of any research in line with gender gaps, the generational distances that can be seen in Figure 2.3

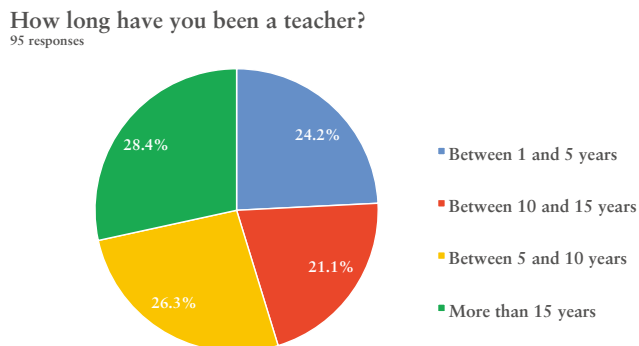


Figure 2.3 Teaching experience

Source: Own elaboration.

This way, this image shows the possibility of approaching experiences with the incorporation and use of ICTs in daily life, where the digital gap is evident, since ICTs are not always available to those who teach due to generational distances, those who learn through higher education institutions and their university autonomy, those who are trained to be teachers (due to focus problems) and due to digital gaps (gender, race, class, age, generation, sex). Another important aspect to highlight is that, from the 95 participating teachers, 76 had not taught in 100% virtual scenarios before the pandemic, as can be seen in Figure 2.4

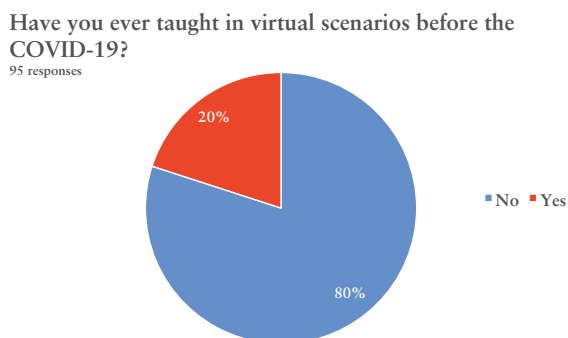


Figure 2.4 Online teaching before COVID-19

Source: Own elaboration.

Education, as a relevant factor for society, is governed by terms of quality and equity where, for today's globalized world, the use of digital tools for educational innovation would seem to be inherent to the offer of higher education; this, without even having considered the experience and training of teachers in terms of the digital skills required to account for the educational offer that is promised to students.

ICTs have led to new literacies that enhance 21st century skills and competencies, which are mainly exercised in the digital practices that young people carry out in informal learning contexts (Busquet et al., 2013), mostly in leisure spaces and times. The perceptions of time are also relevant, time appears as the predominant factor, ever since, for the case that occupies this writing, the sudden and mandatory change from face-to-face education to virtual education was considered; besides, the new ways of being and doing education in confinement were beginning to be understood (see Figure 2.5).

How long has it been since you had to start doing 100% virtual classes?

95 responses

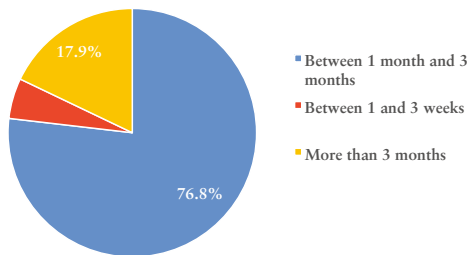


Figure 2.5 100% online classes

Source: Own elaboration.

However, at the time of the exploration, unexpected comments emerged. Some teachers stated that not everyone was trained in digital skills and, by way of “analogy”, we all found ourselves sailing in an ocean learning to swim, without help, without a life jacket, alone and lying there without any prior warning or attention (Survey, participant 1, 20.03.2020). Therefore, there is fear, frustration, and feelings

of shame, grief and anger. But there is also emotion, and that is an opportunity. We had them explore on the internet how many tools were suggested or found, many times without considering the curriculum, the class contents or the educational objectives. This makes evident the lack of synchronization between ICTs and planning, which are approached indiscriminately in order to see “what’s going on”, which certainly leaves open the consideration of in-depth and ethnographic research in the field.

The findings of both moments allow a first approach to the experience that university teachers have when they decide to incorporate ICTs in their educational tasks. They address beliefs, thoughts and previous experiences in this regard, which are the reasons why the use of ICTs is promoted or not in the educational field. That can be approached from two categories.

First, ICTs appear to be something “relatively” new for teachers. They said that “it is still not very clear what they are and what they are for” (Survey, participant 2, 24.03.2020). The only thing that is clear is that they must be used and if “there is the internet and computers, then there is ICTs.” When the internet arrived in the 90’s and the use of technology in all environments began to grow exponentially, no one had ever imagined the human and virtual relationships of today’s world. Education has historically been understood from a face-to-face perspective and with a traditional approach that only in the last years has been transformed.

Second, there is a certain fear of the use of ICTs and its consequences. It seems that teachers feel insecure about it in the formal educational environment. In words of John Hartley, a pioneer of cultural studies in England: “For the most part, education systems have responded to the digital age by prohibiting school access to digital environments such as YouTube [...] by establishing ‘fences’ or walls under strict teacher control” (2009, p. 130). This perception is widespread among teachers, where some of them are trying to train themselves in different online options, ranging from free to paid, in order to stay active and current in their jobs. So, in this context, starting to think about digital education becomes an indisputable ideal for the academic community.

Reality forces us to consider training in digital skills as a digital gap course for both those who teach and those who learn.

Conclusion and reflection

The experience and feelings of teachers show that, although they have the greatest responsibility within the education system, education is not just a challenge for teachers. As it is a social movement, the digital challenge also falls to society. Regarding this, we recognize ourselves in the comments, feelings and experiences of others. It is not only the researcher who reflects on this, but also the teacher, the woman, with concerns and needs regarding the use of ICTs. This leads to be “there”. Malinowski invited us to “dive” into the field of study to understand, without intervening, how the teachers experience the need to include ICTs in their academic work. In this sense, teachers’ stories are permeated by a formative heritage that is characteristic of their ways of “being and doing” as teachers today. All of them stated that they had not received training in digital skills in their professional careers, some evoked having used “typewriters and other computers, and thus were advancing in their studies” (Survey, participant 3, 24.03.2020), and only in their jobs did they start listening and using ICTs.

At this time, since the confinement, all teachers have faced the challenge of virtual education and have been permanently looking for information and tools to be able to do their job successfully. However, not only these issues are beyond the scope of teaching. It is necessary to consider the specific needs of educational support, universal access to the internet, and the social and personal well-being of teachers and students, which again contemplates the role of the university and society:

Bridging the gaps with the lack of coverage of easily accessible internet networks for students and even teachers, breaking down stereotypes of what we teachers are, and the challenge of ensuring that all children can access virtual classes without proper equipment and the lack of empathy of parents. (Survey, participant 2, 24.03.2020)

It is no longer just a question of overcoming the crisis caused by COVID-19, but a teaching exercise that requires equality, training, resources and institutional support to account for the quality education that is continuously being offered. The fact that face-to-face teaching will suddenly cease to exist and the constant uncertainty about what is going to happen continue to show the only opportunity left: keep up with the teaching-learning processes. This has meant that improvisation and the incorporation of ICTs promote new practices without prior testing, even though these are supposed to maintain quality education. At home, teachers have found it difficult to share equipment with their families and to provide permanent internet connectivity, while they are exploring the virtual platforms and some other previously untried tools to develop their classes. The curriculum began to function differently in the virtual environment and the centralization of theoretical content led to the “idealization” of ICTs as the lifeline of education, which has not happened until now.

So, with resources at hand, but without in-depth training on virtual education methods and pedagogy, without tested platforms for such a large volume of users and without clear instructions from the university, teachers demonstrate, in many of the responses, their awareness as guarantors of equal opportunities for the continuity of education that is framed by a host of social inequalities. There are clearly many students who have not managed to maintain their schedules, and this generates tension and frustration for teachers: “Our students come from rural areas, farms where sometimes there is not even water, let alone internet — how are you going to demand that they get connected or do the jobs?” (Survey, participant 2, 24.03.2020).

Besides, teachers reflect on the fact that their daily experiences with the use of ICTs influence not only their educational work, but also the way in which they perceive their social reality, the place they occupy in the university and their identity in relation to students. This helps to understand ownership as the moment of personal appropriation when basic skills are developed to increase the personal productivity of the “citizen teacher”, while making use of ICTs synchronously and asynchronously (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2008).

Additionally, the responses highlight the work overload, this is, the need to reconcile personal and work lives of teachers who have blurred schedules and focused on addressing work situations that go beyond their work, as a result of the pandemic and the closure. This reality also has to do with health, as the constant use of the computer also drains body and mind. Visual fatigue is evident with headaches, blurred vision or eye irritation; likewise, lower back pain, muscle stiffness and joint pain in the arms, hands and wrists, which extends to the fingers. This is also new for teachers who were not used to these “permanent body postures”, which interrupts the appropriation of ICTs: “I have serious vision problems; [...] the headache is permanent” (Survey, participant 3, 24.03.2020).

“It will never be the same to be teaching through a screen as it is to be there, in the classroom” (Survey, participant 1, 20.03.2020). With all these experiences, teachers must continue to “catch up” with technology to be able to continue teaching, which implies following a digital literacy process by their own means, while the university “fills them with work” that was not there before. They immediately recognize that ICTs are very important when it comes to teaching as they motivate students, facilitate some learning, help students learn by playing and even allow us to continue relating to others in the virtual world. People mean their motivations in a particular vocabulary that corresponds to their world and, in turn, refers to the uniqueness of social, cultural, historical and economic contexts. Merleau-Ponty pointed out that we are “all amalgams resulting from our relationships in and with the world; the world is always with us” (San Martín, 2014, p. 107). However, the teachers make an important clarification: “Teachers are not machines, we are humans, and the use of technology in the classroom is for us, it does not turn on by itself, it does not work, we need each other” (Survey, participant 1, 20.03.2020).

In general, from this analysis and methodological reflection, it can be seen that teachers are faced with a variety of situations both outside and within the school that go beyond the crisis of the pandemic. This makes us think about our roles in the research, since, somehow, we feel that we can be not only the researchers but also the subjects of study; this, because the situations mentioned so far also suit us. We

must always keep in mind that, from the perspective of grounded theory, the ultimate goal is the generation of theory: Sometimes a new one is created or an existing one is perfected. That is one of its main contributions to science, and therefore to the research in this framework.

All these situations create barriers in the process of incorporating ICTs, where life stories play a predominant role, since they are permeated by previous experiences with little or no interaction with ICTs. Clearly, digital literacy processes have become a priority that requires the support of the university and a synchronization of the use of digital tools with the curriculum, which has not been considered until now.

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Kahoot and Quizizz, Alternatives Using Smartphones for EFL Classrooms

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Introduction and Problem Statement

“Learners can be active makers and shapers of their own learning” (JISC Innovation Group, 2009, p. 51). This postulate is interesting because the teacher has been traditionally seen as the single actor and center of the teaching-learning-assessment process. However, the approach has changed over time, and thanks to the influence and integration of

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new technologies, the role of both teachers and students has evolved. Thus, the learning process and the idea of students being “active makers” of their learning is simply fascinating in the academic context.

In fact, in this procedure of self-learning and self-analyzing, students could turn to mobile devices. In this sense, Rush (2011) mentions the importance that information and communication technologies (ICTs) has had over the years. Therefore, he insists that learning processes are influenced by the intensive use of these technologies, and makes special reference to the use of smartphones in academia. That is why the objective is to facilitate this learning method; thus, allowing students to question, and to be detached from, the primary use pattern that they employ with their mobile devices.

Actually, Palma et al. (2018) refer to the great qualities of smartphones. They remark that the smartphone has the basic functions of a cell phone and the same technical characteristics of a computer, as well as mobility and increased battery performance. These features make it a powerful device to use in EFL classrooms. Therefore, learning English through smartphones is becoming more frequent in EFL classrooms, which is why its developers offer apps that have innovative and user-friendly characteristics. It allows EFL students to use these options inside and outside the classroom to get the most out of learning the English language (Hossain, 2018).

In this context, it is increasingly common to use educational game apps within the EFL classroom. For instance, Kahoot, Quizizz (both selected for this study), EDpuzzle, Socrative, Quizdom, Line, Quizlet, FluentU, Crossword Puzzles, Flashcards PPT and PDF are some examples. To use these, students are required to use laptops, tablets or smartphones — which are widely preferred by students. For many reasons, they choose this last type of device because of the security and level of relationship they have with it and, of course, due to the convenience of their use. Teaching through game applications allows for dynamic and entertaining classes in which student participation, motivation and learning are encouraged (Hossain, 2018). Furthermore, the literature shows that all these applications are used internationally. Students and teachers have obtained positive results in countries such as Ecuador (Llerena & Rodríguez, 2017), Indonesia (Wibawa et al., 2019)

and Turkey, (Göksün & Gürsoy, 2019); also in Asian countries where this type of application is being used often to learn English (Hossain, 2018). These and many other studies have demonstrated the success of smartphones in the classroom for language learning.

Therefore, proposing a study with these characteristics is very significant and interesting since it will help to make the students' perceptions visible regarding the use of two apps in class. In this process, the key tool is the smartphone. Hence, this study aims to define how the use of the Kahoot and Quizizz apps influences the teaching-learning-assessment process.

Methodology

For this study, a descriptive design was used. The circumstances in which the data were collected were not modified; therefore, it was a non-experimental study. The sample was intentional, consisting of 53 young adult students (23 men and 30 women), whose ages ranged from 18 to 24 years ($M = 20.52$). The participants in this study attend the Universidad de Cuenca, a public higher education institution in Ecuador. They are categorized at A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) of the compulsory English courses taught by the Department of Languages of the university.

Prior to the use of Kahoot and Quizizz apps in class, the "Smartphone and university students' perspectives" questionnaire by Irina Salcines and Natalia González (2016) was applied. It evaluated eight dimensions; however, the only one that was useful and aligned to the purpose of this study was the dimension "use" — in order to obtain information on how many hours students used the smartphone both at home and at the university. To gather the data, the answers of the participants were collected through Google Forms. Later, a second qualitative questionnaire was also applied in order to get information related to the use of Kahoot and Quizizz in class; the researcher designed this instrument.

An academic procedure was carried out and the students were informed about the project. They had a couple of questions regarding it,

which were answered. After this, the questionnaires were applied during a day of classes, so students' schedules were not modified. Finally, the responses were collected and the results were systematized. On the other hand, the process itself of using Kahoot and Quizizz apps was developed as follows in the next section.

Findings

Considering the importance of using the smartphone with academic purposes, it was necessary to know how many hours the students would be using it. So, the “Smartphone and university students' perspectives” questionnaire (Salcines & González, 2016) was applied at the beginning of the process. Figure 1 shows that 77.35% of the participants used the smartphone from two to three hours a day for academic purposes, while only 7% of them used it up to four hours.

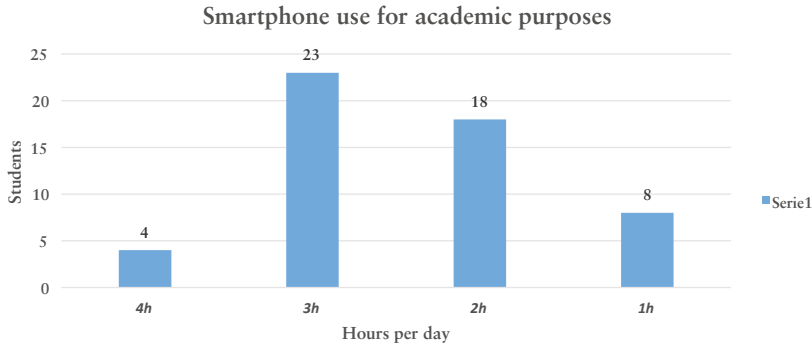


Figure 3.1 Smartphone use for academic purposes

Source: Own elaboration.

As students used their smartphones an average of three hours a day for academic purposes, it was considered a feasible and relevant idea to use it in the classroom. Likewise, 65% of students indicated that they had “advanced model” smartphones while the rest of participants had “a basic model” of mobile phone, though both these phone types allowed them to navigate and work with these two apps.

Once the information related to the smartphone use for academic purposes was done, the next phase started. At the end of the week, in their last unit session, the students had 20-30 minutes to complete a Kahoot or Quizizz activity in order to practice English grammar and vocabulary. To do so, they used their own smartphones. The dynamics allowed students to join the activity and complete it without any problem, regardless of the capabilities of their smartphones. Students had free internet access on the university campus.

This smartphone activity was an important element in the study process. In fact, it was related to the unit the students were working on and had 15 exercises/questions on average. Both Kahoot and Quizizz apps have time setting options, so each question was set up to last maximum two minutes. The purpose of the “longer time” setting was to benefit the students; in other words, that they did not feel pressure to finish the activity as soon as possible; instead, they could analyze what was learned in each exercise. In the process, if the students had questions, they were not allowed to ask the teacher or their classmates. They were encouraged to do their best. At the end of the activity, two different approaches were used. First, students worked in groups of three to five members and gave each other feedback. Second, the teacher provided general feedback to all students based on their results. In both situations, the Excel document with the results generated after each activity was uploaded to the university’s “E-virtual” academic platform, so that the students and the teacher could always review and access the results.

At the end of the semester, the students responded to the “Influence of Kahoot and Quizizz in my English learning” questionnaire, designed by the study’s researcher. Some of the most relevant information is mentioned as follows. First, only six students (11.3%) had previously used Kahoot or Quizizz to learn a foreign language. Second, 37 students preferred the Kahoot app over Quizizz. Third, 48 students considered that the number of questions (15 on average) in each session was enough in order to reinforce their English practice. Thus, these two apps seem to be a good option to use in class and assess students in a formative way.

With regard to question number five (“How have I learned from my mistakes after completing the exercises?”), many students remarked that, “Having their individual feedback in the E-virtual after doing their own exercise is something very positive, we can check whenever we want.” They also mentioned, “We know what grammar point we have to improve on, so I ask the teacher for extra exercises to work on” (students #4, 29, 36, 48, Influence of Kahoot and Quizizz in my English learning, Jan-5-2020). Furthermore, when students were asked to explain if they thought Kahoot or Quizizz were innovative and dynamic apps to be used in class-learning, most of them agreed and said “yes” — which represented 95% of the sample. In particular, one of them stated, “The use of cell phones and applications has been positive because it has allowed me to challenge myself and my knowledge and detect my difficulties with grammar and vocabulary” (student #14, Influence of Kahoot and Quizizz in my English learning, Jan-5-2020).

It is important to consider that the activity was part of a formative evaluation; therefore, the students did not feel a greater degree of stress or worry. To illustrate, one participant said, “I was not stressed because it was not graded, and my objective was to learn from my own mistakes, and I did... I also improved my global test grade in the second term, mainly in the use of language section” (student #9, Influence of Kahoot and Quizizz in my English learning, Jan-5-2020). Another one said, “I was worried at the very beginning because I saw the chronometer, but later I felt more comfortable and did all my exercises” (student #36, Influence of Kahoot and Quizizz in my English learning, Jan-5-2020). Instead, they focused on what they were doing and why they chose “x” instead of “y”; therefore, they completed the activity in a more conscientious and committed way.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to define how the use of the Kahoot and Quizizz apps influence the teaching-learning-assessment process in the classroom with a group of A2 Level English students. Once the students answered the first questionnaire “Smartphone and University

Students' perspectives" (Salcines & González, 2016), the main results were as follows. To begin with, all the participants had a mobile phone that let them access Quizizz or Kahoot, even if 35% of the sample did not have mobile phones with super advanced technology. Likewise, more than 70% of the students used the smartphone at least two hours a day for academic purposes. This information could be explained by the technological evolution that brings with it the creation of many apps, which compete to be the users' favorite one. In fact, in the field of education, gamification has been used to generate greater effectiveness in learning, through enhanced user participation and motivation (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2017).

Regarding the information obtained with the second questionnaire, the following evidence can be highlighted. Students were not familiar with Kahoot and Quizizz apps. Thus, it can be noted that 88.7% of the sample had not used them before for academic purposes, nor for learning a foreign language. So, although the potential of smartphone use in the classroom has not been fully characterized, the development of new educational apps and existing studies evaluating the advantages of using the smartphone and didactic apps in the classroom endorse them as powerful educational tools (Palma et al., 2018).

The smartphone should become a useful ally in the teaching-learning-assessment process in daily university work. In fact, many students — more than 75% — used the word “positive” to describe their experience using these two apps as a tool to self-learn and self-analyze their errors. Thus, the use of Kahoot and Quizizz was very positive and helpful in the students' self-assessment. These free apps allowed students to question themselves about what they have been doing in their English class, and how they can improve and overcome their difficulties. These results are similar to those obtained in the studies by Balasubramanian (2017), Wibawa et al. (2019), Llerena and Rodríguez (2017), Palma et al. (2018), and Göksün and Gürsoy (2019). In these studies, the activities carried out with Kahoot were more effective than those with Quizizz. Similarly, Boden and Hart (2018) indicated in their study that students expressed a preference for Kahoot, achieving very positive results both in social interaction and in the involvement of more introverted students, as well as greater enthusiasm and

competitiveness. These statements also coincide with those expressed by 37 participants who said they also preferred Kahoot over Quizizz.

Using these apps and smartphones also helps teachers include gamification in class. In fact, 95% of the participants agreed that the use of Kahoot and Quizizz was a dynamic and innovative resource in class. Hence, these engaging and enjoyable activities intensify students' enthusiasm and motivation, promoting individual and collaborative work (Silva & Martínez, 2017). Although the use of these two apps was innovative for most of the students, it is important to consider that the use of smartphone apps is not the only innovative resource available for the class, and that the excessive use of this technology could cause negative effects on students. There are other online tools such as Quizlet, FluentU, Crossword Puzzles, Flashcards PPT and PDF. Although these could be used to work on grammar or vocabulary, they do not necessarily offer instant feedback like Quizizz and Kahoot.

During this study, students did not report any social, family or academic problems, but it is important to consider them. In reality, using the cell phone in class also has its disadvantages, such as cyberbullying, digital distraction, technological addiction, social, family and academic problems, abstraction and loss of the sense of reality. However, it is important not to panic or restrict its use in class as the advantages and benefits of its use in the classroom cannot be ignored by teachers (Silva & Martínez, 2017). Young students are usually able to be active learners, and the use of the smartphone as a study tool encourages enthusiasm to participate and, at the same time, makes students focus on maximizing the use of this tool as a means of learning in an enjoyable way (Wibawa et al., 2019).

Conclusions

The results of the study show that the use of mobile apps such as Kahoot and Quizizz in EFL classrooms generates positive results. In other words, they effectively influence the teaching-learning-assessment process in university students. It allowed them to not only obtain good or even better grades, but also to feel more confident because they have

been learning, studying and analyzing their own mistakes through the process of studying grammar and vocabulary.

That is the reason why teachers should implement these academic apps through the use of the smartphone and also of other mobile devices. The idea is to break paradigms and start seeing the smartphone as an ally in the EFL classroom. Besides, it could help to detect students' specific needs, which could help teachers customize their English teaching methodology. In other words, students who still could have problems with any specific grammar point could be called on to take individual tutoring sessions or just work on their specific needs.

It is important to consider the future scenarios of this study. In fact, it is not only interesting but also necessary to approach this study in a broader way, maybe using a bigger sample and including students from other English levels or even other languages, in order to analyze different variables. It will allow future researchers to expand and develop the students' perceptions of using not only the smartphone, but also these academic apps. Nowadays, it is crucial to discuss and integrate these resources in the EFL classroom because of the changes that the dynamic of the educational system is facing.

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Appendix A. Influence of Kahoot and Quizizz in my English Learning

Basic Information

Gender: M ___ F ___

Age: ___

Major: _____

Questionnaire

1. Have you ever used Kahoot or Quizizz?
Yes ___ No ___
2. Did you like to use Kahoot or Quizizz each time you finished a unit?
Yes ___ No ___
3. Was the time enough to answer the questions in each exercise?
Yes ___ No ___
Why? _____
4. Were the number of questions enough to reinforce my grammar and vocabulary practice?
Yes ___ No ___
Why? _____
5. How have I learned from my mistakes after completing the exercises?

6. Did your grades improve at any time of the semester?
Yes ___ No ___

Explain: _____

7. Did you feel more self-confident at the time you had to work on oral or written production?

Yes ___ No ___

Explain: _____

8. How often did you feel stressed while you were working on the exercises?

Always ___

Very Frequently ___

Occasionally ___

Rarely ___

Very Rarely ___

Never ___

Explain: _____

9. Do you think Kahoot and Quizizz are innovative and dynamic apps to be used in class-learning?

Yes ___ No ___

Explain: _____

10. Which app do you prefer the most?

Kahoot ___ Quizizz ___

Thanks for your participation.

Appendix B. “Smartphone and University Students’ perspectives”

BLOCK 1: Personal Information

(This question is required)

SEX:

- Man
- Woman

AGE: _____

Do you have a smartphone?

Yes __ No ____

Indicate the approximate daily time that you use your Smartphone for academic purposes. Choose one of the following options:

- 1 hour a day
- 2 hours a day
- 3 hours a day or more

Dimension B. Use

Rate the following items according to the proposed scale:

1. Strongly disagree; 2. Disagree; 3. Agree; 4. Completely agree.

Choose if you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the use of the smartphone:

I use the smartphone in the classroom for academic purposes on personal initiative.	1 2 3 4
I use the smartphone in the teaching-learning-evaluation process because the teacher guides its use.	1 2 3 4
I use the smartphone in the library for academic purposes	1 2 3 4
I use the smartphone at home to do academic tasks.	1 2 3 4
I use the smartphone to communicate with my classmates about academic aspects.	1 2 3 4
I use the smartphone as a tool for academic management and organization (E-mail, Web UC, agenda, etc.).	1 2 3 4

Source: Salcines & González (2016).

Practicing Audio Transcription as the Key to Balance the English Skills in the EFL Classroom

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Introduction

As an EFL teacher, I have taught English in primary schools, secondary schools, language institutes, institutes for work, and currently I teach in college. Throughout these years, I have experienced difficulties balancing the language skills in the EFL classroom. I think this balance is difficult to achieve since some skills seem to be ignored, especially the listening, “it can be asserted that the listening skill receives significantly less attention in some of the state schools and it is mostly avoided by many teachers” (Çakır, 2018, p. 167). Not only it

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is the least developed skill in class, but it is also hard to find adequate listening material that adapts to the English level of the students.

Good listening material is hard to find because of the aspects we must consider, for example the topic, the speed, pronunciation, accents and so on. As some of us might have experienced when doing listening comprehension exercises in class, students do not seem to understand much or they mention that the speakers talk too fast, or simply they get distracted, “if the speech rate is too fast and the students cannot catch the words, they naturally get distracted and will be unable to continue to process the information” (Renandya & Farrell, 2011, p. 3). I have listened to my students saying that the audio is just too fast; therefore, they lose interest in the exercise. Also, the difficulty to find good material might be a reason why this skill is not as developed as the others in the EFL classroom.

When doing listening exercises in my classes, at the beginning I also thought (as the students said) that the audio exercises were in fact too fast or that the speaker had an accent which made it more difficult, or that the audio was not accurate with the student English level, and so on. However, I considered that the recordings for the exercises I made in class and even the audio for the exams did not really have a high-speed rate, plus their speaking was quite clear. Thus, I wonder what is really the reason why a student could not understand spoken English?

As an EFL teacher, I think that it is necessary to find an answer to this question in order to help students balance the four English skills, “our main job as teachers of foreign language listening is to help our students develop procedural knowledge, i.e. knowledge about how to process spoken language with ease and automaticity” (Renandya & Farrell, 2011, p. 58). In order to be able to process spoken language, students need to practice. I estimate that the listening exercise to recognize spoken words can improve not only the listening comprehension skill, but the speaking skill as well, and this will result in the improvement of the writing and reading skills too; even more, this can also favor the student’s exams results. In my opinion, this means that the practice of spoken English recognition should always be a starter level for any EFL student, before stepping onto more advanced English levels and more complex exercises.

The constant practice of listening and transcribing a variety of audios could benefit all the English skills, resulting in students with higher proficiency in the English language:

Actually, exposure to English language improves language learning as exposure refers to the total contacts with a target language that a learner receives, both in verbal and in written forms [...] students should be continually exposed to the English language through many types of media, such as movies, songs and the internet on a daily basis to help them get rid of their points of weakness and improve their fluency as well as proficiency in English. (Al Zoubi, 2018, pp. 160 - 161)

I have seen some colleagues struggling to help students reach the desired English language proficiency, nonetheless the lack of work in the listening skills cannot be blamed on the teachers since logically I would be blaming myself. I also know that sometimes we are forced by the curriculum to focus on some skills more than others because we have to obtain good results when it comes to testing. I have taken into account not only the numbers, but also other aspects. For instance, in my classes I have encountered quite large classrooms, unmotivated students, frustrated students, lack of resources, and so on, “typically constrained by the large size of classes, limited resources and the purported valued aim of understanding written texts and grammar that relegated skills such as speaking or listening” (British Council México, 2018, p. 58). As it is mentioned, many other factors contribute to the inequitable work on the forgotten skill.

I have reasserted my point of view when grading exams, because I have seen poor results in the listening section of the mid-term exams at Universidad Santo Tomás, Villavicencio. The listening skill section reflected the lowest scores compared to the other sections. In these results, I have seen that the number of correct answers is significantly less accurate compared to the grammar, reading or language in use sections, “the correlation number between speaking and listening grades tell us that there is little relationship between speaking grades and listening grades of preparatory students. The common sense tells

people that there is a high relationship between listening and speaking” (Celik & Yavuz, 2015, p. 2140). I agree with this statement since not only the common sense shows the relation between listening and speaking, but also the students who have better scores in reading have also better scores in writing.

As I continued working as an EFL teacher, at one point I wondered if the enforcement of some skills more than others in the language classroom was “our” problem, and by this, I mean a Colombian problem. I found out it is not only in this part of the world that we have this situation, but the pattern also extended into other countries. In this regard, Ulum asserts that “the main focus of the English courses which these students in Turkey practice is on language structures, reading comprehension, vocabulary and writing, as well as translation from one language into the other” (2015, p. 2). I think that we do the same in Colombia, because I have encountered students in class who despite studying English for years as a mandatory subject in school, they cannot recognize simple words such as “friends” or “pencil” when properly pronounced; however, they recognize the words when they are written.

If a student already recognizes a written word, we should work less on the writing skills and more on the listening part, in order to eventually achieve the desired speaking level in the students; “every teacher of language knows that one’s oral production ability [...] is only as good as one’s listening comprehension ability” (Brown, 2004, p. 119). I think the listening skill is the key to balance all the skills.

To find this balance in my classes, first I spent quite some time looking for the material. For me, the adequate material had to be less than one minute long and be clearly or slowly spoken. These materials I looked for were not the usual listening exercises such as conversations; in contrast, most of them were short stories, sometimes movie trailers and advertisements. According to Çakır, “foreign language learners need to be exposed to ample listening activities in class in order to improve their listening comprehension ability” (2018, p. 168). I found these audios mostly through the internet, which nowadays is a valuable resource for teaching as we know.

My main goal was always to expose the students to spoken word recognition, so the first exercises were done in a simple way: I played the audio, let them write some sentences, rewound and played it again. I did not play all the audio at once, but I made constant pauses for the students to have time to think and write. At the end of the exercises, I gave the students the listening transcriptions of the audios so they could compare their transcription to the original one. At first, students simply read the paper with no hesitation, and when pointed out that some of those words they were listening to were the same they already knew in a written way, but had been written incorrectly, most of them were surprised. I felt there was some inner motivation in them to urge an answer. As I advanced in my listening practice, I started sharing the audios by phone and the students also had earphones, so the transcription exercise would be easier for them to do because they did not have major noise or talking distractions. Also, to complete the transcriptions there was no timer, no grades, no pressure; it was simply a spoken word recognition exercise. It is important for me to mention that these exercises were not graded.

The results for this practice were noticeable since most of the students improved their number of recognized spoken words. It was remarkable that in the first exercises students had many blank spaces, but the last exercises showed more written words; and most important, an increased number of words written correctly. I also have to say that this exercise seemed to motivate my students, because I found them often comparing one to another the number of words written.

The statistics of this exercise are being analyzed for further research, nevertheless I would like to encourage my colleagues to implement the spoken word recognition exercises to their practice, because as teachers of a foreign language, I presume that it is quite difficult for students to be exposed to current spoken English. My urge is to raise awareness about the listening skill; it cannot be the forgotten one. I hope that, as the time goes by, this practice in my classroom improves significantly the exam results and, of course, the English level of the students.

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HyperDocs for Language Teaching, Building Autonomy in Learners while Recognizing Their Humanness

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Introduction

Language teaching has been changing and exponentially moving away from an instrumental view (Castañeda, 2017) to a developmental approach of the learner as a whole. Besides, technology has provided some interesting opportunities to extend the language learning experience. Language teaching is no longer only about discreet language items, but it has become an opportunity to develop social justice

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(Castañeda, 2017), 21st century skills, and socio-emotional learning (Rodríguez-Buitrago, 2020), among others. Thus, the roles of language educators have shifted, since mastering linguistic aspects is no longer enough to be a good language teacher today. Constant reflection around the role of language teachers will reveal new expectations in order to become change agents and innovators from the language classroom and to transcend the view of language learning as a way to “insert the country in processes of universal communication, in the global economy, and in the cultural scene, with internationally comparable standards” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2008, p. 6). The present reflective article takes the reader through the journey of discovery and lessons learned of a language educator interested in educational technology, flipped learning and positive education.

A Personal Journey with Flipped Learning

As a teacher educator, I have always thought that my role extends the mere transmission of content to the teaching of learners. I have thought, for long, that knowledge is in the books, and that now, with the Internet and the revolution of information, teachers need to go beyond just sharing content with students. The role of any teacher is transformational and agentic in the lives of learners. Students deserve to receive experience, advice and shelter from teachers, not facts they can simply search on the Internet. Thus, as a curious teacher and teacher educator, and in the interest of becoming an agent of change in the lives of those under my care — as well as a “highly effective teacher” — I have tried and tested several teaching techniques and strategies (Quinn et al., 2014). Since 2014, flipped learning has exerted a central role in my classes as a way to maximize time with students and provide them with meaningful learning experiences where feedback, active learning and they were at the center.

Flipped Learning

In 2012, two American chemistry teachers coined the term ‘the flipped classroom’ to describe a simple teaching methodology where the activity of learners was at the center. Since then, the term has evolved. Two years later, the Flipped Learning Network (FLN) proclaimed flipped learning:

[...] as a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group pace is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter. (2014, para. 1)

Then in 2018, the Academy of Active Learning Arts and Sciences (AALAS) proposed a new definition based on the opinions of over 100 delegates in 49 different countries (myself included). The new definition reads:

Flipped learning is a framework that enables educators to reach every student. The flipped approach inverts the traditional classroom model by introducing course concepts before class, allowing educators to use class time to guide each student through active, practical, innovative applications of the course principles. (AALAS, 2018, para. 1)

In 2020, interest in flipped learning has grown due to the COVID-19 pandemic; so, I proposed my own definition based on my own experience:

[...] flipped learning is a *compassionate* teaching methodology in which students are placed at the center of the learning process and teachers are architects of authentic, meaningful, and intentional learning experiences for both spaces of learning (in and out the classroom). (Rodríguez-Buitrago, 2020)

Regardless of the definition used, flipped learning inverts the use of time, content and materials in class and re-signifies the roles of teachers and students in the classroom. Thanks to flipped learning, many educational buzzwords have become real practices in the classroom. Flipped learning has facilitated differentiated instruction, gamification, project-based learning, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), task-based learning, positive education and the construction of student autonomy in my classrooms. Flipped learning has also been the catalyst that has prepared the ground for catering language learning to the needs of students, differentiate instruction and craft their autonomy and self-regulation.

HyperDocs in my Flipped Language Classes

How Did I Arrive at HyperDocs

Mastery flipped learning implies a great effort for the teacher towards the creation of materials and the offering of pacing suggestion for students to access content and show mastery of the different topics at their own pace (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). However, during my initial attempts to implement mastery flipped learning, I assumed naïvely that my students would have the necessary autonomy to tackle the materials on their own and in a progressive manner. During the planning of my first mastery flipped learning class, I failed to provide the necessary scaffolding for students to be able to perform tasks successfully on their own, and thus, my students were left stranded and with a lot of questions; so to no surprise, learning did not happen as I thought it would, magically.

In consequence, after failing monumentally at implementing flipped mastery learning the wrong way (Rodríguez-Buitrago, 2017), I started looking for alternatives to craft a better learning experience for my language learners where they were central, but I was still present as ‘a guide on the side.’ I knew I wanted my students to access grammar on their own, while strengthening their sense of autonomy and self-efficacy toward learning the language (Bandura, 1997). Thus, I embarked

on a quest for instructional design models that could help me engineer an enriching learning experience that combined flipped learning elements, with educational technology, allowing my students to make important decisions about their learning — and I found HyperDocs.

What are HyperDocs?

In the words of their creators, HyperDocs are “transformative, interactive Google Docs that replace the standard worksheet method of delivering instruction” (Hilton et al., 2016, pos. 69). Hilton et al. say the following: “A HyperDoc is the teaching pedagogy involved when making important decisions about what to teach and how to teach with technology to redefine the overall student experience” (2016, pos. 69). Also, more recently, Carpenter et al. noted that “HyperDocs can be used for direct instruction for the whole class, collaborative learning, and self-paced tasks for individuals” (2020, p. 2).

I started using HyperDocs in 2017 as described in a blog-post entitled *Enhancing Flipped Mastery in my English Class through HyperDocs* (Rodríguez-Buitrago, 2018), and I continued to improve my HyperDocs since then by integrating positive education into language teaching through the activities I planned and the materials I had students explore. HyperDocs might sound like a regular worksheet, but they differ in that they are intentionally built as whole units of study where all the levels of Bloom’s taxonomy are present and where students are invited to interact with the content, with the teachers and among them. A regular worksheet does not hold the power to do all that.

HyperDocs in the Language Learning Class

Hyperdocs facilitate the implementation of flipped learning, because they help teachers provide a scaffold for the learning experience, in and out of the classroom. Bruner (1960) highlights the importance of structure in learning. He asserts that: “The teaching and learning of structure, rather than simply the mastery of facts and techniques, is at the center of the problem of transfer” (Bruner, 1960, p. 12). HyperDocs provide the structure that learners need in order to learn to make

decisions about their own learning. Since the structure of HyperDocs is sequential and scaffolded, learners work towards mastery of the topics at their own pace, while exercising their autonomy to make decisions about certain aspects of their learning (timeframes, tools, places to study, etc.). In flipped learning, students are supposed to access content on their own, and most of the time, videos are the element of choice to share this content with students. However, HyperDocs make for a better individual learning space material since they offer a structure that students can easily follow on their own (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). The structure of a HyperDoc facilitates the inclusion of different levels of thinking skills necessary for strong cognitive development (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) in every unit or theme.

HyperDocs are by no means exclusive to language teaching and learning. However, because of their adaptability and flexibility, they have been highly beneficial for any grade, level, topic, or language course I have taught. One of the main principles governing the effective use of HyperDocs is their design. Hilton et al. (2016) propose a seven stage learning cycle in their book and the many templates they offer online. However, the authors also suggest other cycles of learning, such as the “Explore, Flip, Apply” (Musallam, 2012) and the 5E model. The “HyperDoc model” created by the authors features the following stages:

1. *Engage* - Involve students in the content of the lesson by capturing their attention with an image, joke, video or the like
2. *Explore* - Present the content of the unit or lesson in context
3. *Explain* - Provide direct instruction on the topic at hand
4. *Apply* - Have students use the content in different tasks to demonstrate understanding and mastery
5. *Share* - Share products with classmates, the teacher or an external audience
6. *Reflect* - Think metacognitively about the work done and the learning experience
7. *Extend* - Provide additional resources for avid learners to go beyond. (Hilton et al., 2016)

As a teacher, I have used all the stages proposed by Hilton et al. (2016) because I find each one useful to scaffold the learning experience for my students. I have seen the benefits of structuring a learning cycle with these seven steps, since with it I have been able to easily integrate flipped learning principles, autonomy and humanness in my classrooms. However, every teacher is free to decide on the learning cycle they want to use for the design of their HyperDocs. Anyway, I think that it is useful to adopt an existing, tried and tested model at the beginning of the implementation, in order to learn from the experience and make informed decisions for future iterations and designs.

The HyperDoc structure works seamlessly for teaching language in context since teachers can integrate all the communicative skills, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, as well as learning strategies, socio-emotional learning, project or task-based learning, gamification, etc., other things to make the language lesson rich. The stages of HyperDocs also allow students to study topics in more depth and to engage with content substantially.

In my case, I have used HyperDocs mostly to teach grammar structures. I decided to “flip” the grammar component of my courses in order to make more time for speaking and writing. In terms of materials, I have created my own videos, but I have also curated some from the Internet. I have also produced my own exercises and curated others. The flipped teacher, or professional educator, is someone flexible who makes decisions based on feedback from students, his own observations and conversations with colleagues (FLN, 2014). Thus, I have submitted my HyperDocs for scrutiny to all my community to evaluate their effectiveness and reach.

When planning a HyperDoc, I embed it within a unit of study and a topic. For example, the first topic of Upper-Intermediate English at ÚNICA is a review of the present tenses. When we used a textbook, the topic for this unit was “Family and Relationships”. Thus, I started preparing a HyperDoc with this topic in mind. However, later when we stopped using textbooks, I decided to work around this grammar topic with character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; VIA Institute on Character, n.d.).

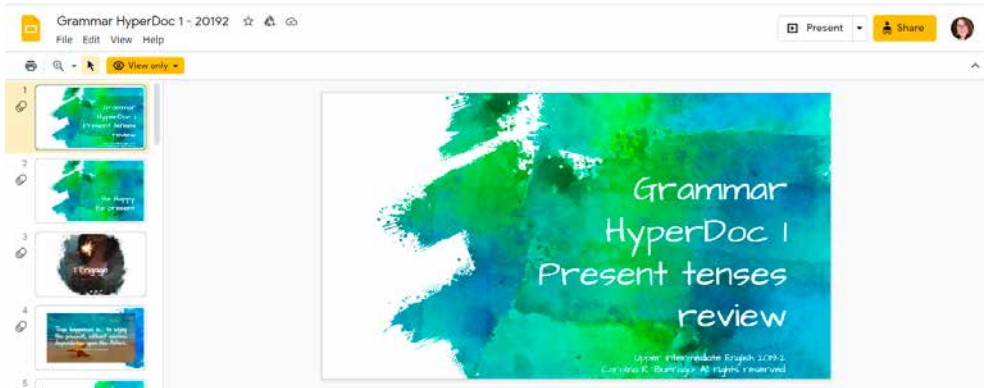


Figure 5.1 Grammar HyperDoc 1 - 20192 Present tenses review slidedeck
Source: Own elaboration.

In order to exemplify the planning process of a HyperDoc within a language class, I will share the different activities there are for each stage in this particular HyperDoc about the present tenses review on the topic of character strengths. A copy of the actual HyperDoc can be made in the following URL address: <https://tinyurl.com/2h2mv9pk>

Table 5.1 A HyperDoc within a language class

Engage	There was an image about being present and a three-minute mindfulness meditation followed by an exercise on AnswerGarden.com asking students about their feelings with the meditation.
Explore	<p>Students are invited to go to the website of the VIA Character Lab (https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register) to register for free in order to take the VIA Character Strengths survey to get their Character Strengths profile.</p> <p>The whole test (50 questions approximately) is written in present tenses because it is aimed at determining the character strengths of people.</p> <p>Sample survey question: <i>Being able to come up with new and different ideas is one of my strong points.</i></p> <p>Answers are provided within a Likert scale that ranges from 1 to 5, 1 being <i>Very much unlike me</i> and 5 being <i>Very much like me</i>.</p> <p>At the end of the exercise, students get a printable report featuring the 24 character strengths in the order of their own profile.</p>

Explain	<p>Since this was going to be the first grammar videos students would watch during the semester, there was a slide for students to learn about Cornell Notes as a method of note-taking.</p> <p>Then, there were three grammar videos from a website called Anglo-Link. The videos featured the direct explanation of the present tenses.</p>
Apply	<p>There were two types of application exercises in this stage. First, a controlled practice exercise that consisted of three present tenses automatically-graded worksheets from the websites https://www.e-grammar.org/ and https://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/</p> <p>In these worksheets, students practiced the structure of the tenses. Then, there was a free practice exercise where students were asked to fill out a Google Form where they wrote a 150-word paragraph summarizing their five signature strengths according to the VIA survey. This exercise was only seen by the teacher, and students received feedback of their use of the tenses.</p>
Share	<p>Students were supposed to make a two-minute video on FlipGrid talking about their five signature character strengths (the first five on the report). This time, students could see each other's videos and comment on them. Actually, students were invited to peer-assess their classmates' videos using a checklist.</p>
Reflect	<p>Students were asked the following questions on a Padlet: <i>How did you feel with your first HyperDoc? How long did it take you to do it? Do you think you were an effective time manager? What would you do differently next time?</i></p>
Extend	<p>There were three optional activities in this stage. One of the activities was an article to learn some mindfulness techniques, another one was a video to learn to make the best out of their character strengths, and another was a grammar resource to extend the study of the present tenses.</p>

Source: Own elaboration.

The time invested in planning this type of lesson is worth it when one sees students' products and opinions about it. At the beginning, students feel overwhelmed with the HyperDoc because they don't know how to separate its study within the days of the week, but soon enough they learn. The following are some comments from students in the reflect section:

Student 1: For me it was a different way to learn and improve grammar, but I love the hyperdoc and the girl from the explanations videos, actually I will use a lot of those videos from AngloLink. And I revised a lot of topics that I use a lot but I forget the structure (sic). SV.

Student 2: This is a really cool and interesting way to study and learn. It is funny, flashy, from my point of view it is like a game, so I always remember do my colorful and funny English task. I want to do it frequently because I enjoy the process. About the content is very nice, because I check what I have studied in my last English classes and there are interesting exercises as the mindful meditation, and the test to know more about ourselves. (sic) LE.

Student 3: I really enjoyed doing this hyperdoc because the topic was pretty exciting, and the steps were actually a good point because it helped me to consolidate grammar structure while learning something new. To my mind, those kinds of topics are really important and joyful because I'm really open to know more about me and to understand me. Thus, it helped me very much. I spent all my morning doing it but I finished it in the afternoon. Well, I had to quit because I needed to go to another place and I finished it though. I'd like to organize the time that I spend doing homework. What I mean is to spend half and a half of the time doing the hyperdoc because understanding the process and steps takes time. Nice hyperdoc (sic) LH.

HyperDocs and the Crafting of Autonomous Learners

Learning a language is a rich opportunity for students to develop autonomy, self-regulation, resilience, a positive self-image, and successful study habits, among others. However, we cannot assume that students come to us with the necessary set of skills to master the language on their own, even when we teach in higher-education. Our content-oriented educational system deprives students from opportunities to reflect about their agency in their learning process, because more attention is paid to the accumulation of facts and the success in standardized tests than to the teaching and development of soft skills. As a result, university professors constantly encounter unprepared students who struggle academically because they cannot organize themselves, they do not have the habit of reading and writing, and get easily distracted.

Unfortunately, in my years as a higher education professor, I have evidenced how college students lack autonomy and self-direction. College students are still too teacher-dependent. According to Holec (1981, as cited in Benson , 2001),

Autonomy in language learning depends on the development and exercise of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action (see Little, 1991:4); autonomous learners assume responsibility for determining the purpose, content, rhythm and method of their learning, monitoring its progress and evaluating its outcomes. (p. 3)

However, our current students live in a world full of distractions and instant gratification that hinders learning and progress, because students expect products to happen magically without putting in the hard work that it takes to achieve deep satisfaction (Deeply Thoughts TV, 2020). Their exposure to technologies such as Netflix or Uber, among others, has an impact on their expectations towards learning and the speed at what processes should happen. As educators, we definitely acknowledge the limitations in these new generations. However, merely complaining about students' inability to focus or to invest themselves in the learning process is not enough to change the situation. Thus, teachers at every educational level have the responsibility to help students develop self-regulation in learners as part of their courses, in order to pave the way for their life-long learning (Rodríguez-Buitrago et al., 2019; Cuesta et al., 2017).

In higher education, professors ought to stop blaming school teachers for students' lack of study habits, routines and tools. Instead, we need to diagnose their skills upon their arrival to our university courses and help them establish action plans to start improving from day one (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). Nonetheless, it would also be interesting to deem the development of autonomous behaviors as a pivotal part of the educational endeavor when in elementary school and high school. Students should learn, early in their education, about time and project management, organization, setting and prioritizing goals and tasks, etc. The development of their executive functions needs to be fostered since school in order to avoid future difficulties. In language learning, we have ample opportunity to teach students about routines, success and step by step processes. So we can modify our units to help students work on these topics instead of the sterile ones that come in textbooks (Núñez, 2020).

HyperDocs are a way to help students develop a learning and autonomous attitude that aids their life-long learning process. In the words of Bruner: “Mastery of the fundamental ideas of a field involves not only the grasping of general principles, but also the development of an attitude toward learning and inquiry, toward guessing and hunches, toward the possibility of solving problems on one’s own” (1960, p. 20).

While completing a HyperDoc, students are constantly faced with the need for making decisions, revising old topics, and choosing the activities they can and need to do to improve their learning process. Scaffolding the learning experience is a natural consequence of using HyperDocs. The teachers create activities within the sequence, but it is students’ responsibility to make decisions on the way to approach the materials. Some students “binge consume” the HyperDoc the first time, just like they might do with a Netflix series, but the cognitive load teaches them they need to segment its study in order to be more effective. Sometimes, though, students do not get to this realization on their own, so we can offer them a pacing schedule to train them on effective use of time while working on the HyperDoc (Appendix A). The benefits of the use of HyperDocs for students’ autonomy development are extensive. The experience is enjoyable for both, the teachers and the students, and the time spent in design is worthwhile.

Socio-Emotional Learning through HyperDocs

Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) is no longer a luxury in 21st century classrooms, and HyperDocs facilitate its seamless integration within any context, in my case, in my language classes. The pandemic revealed the needs of many students, teachers and families for a systematic approach towards emotional awareness, emotional agility, and mental health, among others. In 2019, I had already noticed the importance of SEL because of a difficult case I faced with a student who was evidencing suicidal ideation because of depression. As a language teacher, I felt unprepared to face the situation, but did not look away and searched for assistance. Thus, I came across positive psychology and positive education (Garassini, 2018).

Positive psychology and positive education are two very vast fields. However, my first academic approach towards them was through Character Strengths in a HyperDoc I created for an English class. According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), there are six core virtues: wisdom, courage, humanity, transcendence, justice and temperance. Within these virtues, there are 24 character strengths organized as follows:

Table 5.2 Virtues and attributes by Peterson and Seligman (2004)

Wisdom	Courage	Humanity	Transcendence	Justice	Temperance
Creativity	Bravery	Love	Appreciation	Teamwork	Forgiveness
Curiosity	Perseverance	Kindness	of beauty and	Fairness	Humility
Judgement	Honesty	Social	excellence	Leadership	Prudence
Love of	Zest	intelligence	Gratitude		Self-
learning			Hope		regulation
Perspective			Humor		
			Spirituality		

Source: Own elaboration based on Peterson and Seligman (2004).

According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), we all have the twenty-character strengths. However, we all evidence them in a different order according to our own character. Thus, for one person, humor might be the top one strength, whereas for another person it might be prudence. These differences make us human, and recognizing our own character strengths and those of the people around us can help us build better teams, get to know ourselves better and increase well-being in our lives. Thus, I felt I wanted my students to experience this self-knowledge as students and future educators, in order to get to know themselves by exploring their character strengths, and practice English at the same time. Initially, I created a unit on character strengths to explore them with my Upper Intermediate English students, but currently there is a socio-emotional learning project at ÚNICA (Garassini & Aldana, 2020) and the work with Character Strengths has become a central component of our SEL institutional project.

Conclusion

HyperDocs have been the instructional tool to achieve autonomy and socio-emotional learning in my classes, but the pedagogical decisions behind this design are rooted in my beliefs as a language teacher. Learning English is not a merely instrumental task done for economic reasons, but it can go far beyond transactions. Through the teaching of a language, teachers can help their students develop critical thinking, communication and collaboration, but also to work on mindfulness, compassion and kindness, to get to know themselves, to improve communication patterns with people around them, to be political agents in our society and to be better citizens. As language teachers, we have to abandon the idea of being “just the English teacher” and to adopt our role as change agents capable of transforming education (Granados, 2020). Teacher education programs have an important responsibility in shaping the identities of future teachers through example and modelling (María Lucía Casas, personal communication, 2020).

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Appendix A. HyperDoc Pacing Schedule Sample

Upper Intermediate English

Grammar Hyperdocs Pacing Schedule

WEEK 1	Monday, Feb 4 NO CLASS - INDEPENDENT WORK	Tuesday, Feb 5 DIAGNOSTIC TEST	Wednesday, Feb 6 DIAGNOSTIC TEST	Thursday, Feb 7 DIAGNOSTIC TEST	Friday, Feb 8 DIAGNOSTIC TEST
WEEK 2	Monday, Feb 11 NO CLASS - INDEPENDENT WORK	Tuesday, Feb 12	Wednesday, Feb 13 Start <u>HyperDoc 1</u> (Engage and Explore)	Thursday, Feb 14 Continue <u>HyperDoc 1</u> (Explain and Apply)	Friday, Feb 15 + weekend Continue <u>HyperDoc 1</u> (Share, Reflect and Extend)
WEEK 3	Monday, Feb 18 NO CLASS - INDEPENDENT WORK	Tuesday, Feb 19 GRAMMMAR DAY	Wednesday, Feb 20	Thursday, Feb 21	Friday, Feb 22 + weekend
WEEK 4	Monday, Feb 25 NO CLASS - INDEPENDENT WORK	Tuesday, Feb 26	Wednesday, Feb 27	Thursday, Feb 28 Start <u>HyperDoc 2</u> (Engage, Explore, Explain)	Friday, March 1 + weekend Continue <u>HyperDoc 2</u> (Apply, Reflect, Share and Extend)
WEEK 5	Monday, March 4 NO CLASS - INDEPENDENT WORK	Tuesday, March 5 Continue <u>HyperDoc 2</u> (Apply, Reflect, Share and Extend)	Wednesday, March 6 GRAMMMAR DAY	Thursday, March 7 Start <u>HyperDoc 3</u> (Engage, Explore, Explain)	Friday, March 8 + weekend Continue <u>HyperDoc 3</u> (Apply, Reflect, Share and Extend)
WEEK 6	Monday, March 11	Tuesday, March 12 GRAMMMAR DAY	Wednesday, March 13 *end of term*	Thursday, March 14	Friday, March 15 GRAMMAR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT 1st term

Toward Critical Thinking in Language Teaching: Reflection to Empower Teachers and Learners

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Introduction

I have been teaching English for almost seven years now, mostly at university. I have had the opportunity to work in face-to-face contexts, as well as in distance scenarios. In both settings, I have been teaching general English, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and teacher training programmes. This experience has given me an insight of the current state of language teaching and its relationship with the educational needs and the students' interests.

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To introduce my insight, I will divide this paper into three parts. First, I will expose a theoretical contextualization with the key concepts of reflection and teacher's knowledge, and critical thinking. In addition, I will present a summary of the language teaching methods considering the analysis proposed by Dr. Kumaravadivelu (2005), from his book *Understanding Language Teaching: from Method to Postmethod*. This summary presents how language teaching has evolved and its relationship with the key concepts mentioned before. Second, I will display my insights considering my own teaching experience. Finally, I will present some suggestions to nurture critical thinking in the field of language teaching, and some aspects to reflect.

Theoretical contextualization

Reflection and teacher's knowledge

Richards and Lockhart (1994) propose a reflective approach to teaching in which teachers follow a rigorous process to evaluate their teaching, so they decide, develop and monitor strategies to improve their teaching. This process starts with the collection of data about teaching and the examination of attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices. Then, it uses the information collected and follows critical reflection to ask and answer questions regarding the aspects of teaching and learning (some of these include roles, planning, decision-making and goals). Afterwards, teachers evaluate their teaching practices to implement strategies for change or improvement.

It is important to point out that teachers monitor the scopes of these strategies because critical reflection is an ongoing process. Teachers who follow this approach to teaching have a deeper awareness about the different components and dimensions of teaching, because they are actively involved in reflecting and questioning what is happening in their own classrooms, and as a result they start developing an extensive knowledge base about teaching. Some authors argue that this kind of knowledge constitutes teacher's knowledge.

However, Tsui (2003) presents a detailed analysis of the different characterizations of teacher's knowledge based on three approaches. The first approach considers teacher knowledge as the knowledge of theory that is interiorized to interpret experience. This view integrates both theoretical and practical knowledge, because knowing and action are not separated. "Knowing how" is in the action itself. This "knowing-in-action" requires reflection because it plays a central role in the development of knowledge. Reflection generates a new way of looking at a phenomenon or a problem during the teacher's everyday practices. It is important to highlight that the context permeates the process of reflection, as teachers construct and reconstruct knowledge based on their stories in particular situations (Clandinin, 1992, as cited in Tsui, 2003).

The second approach considers context as a constitutive part of knowledge, that is, the relation of acting *with* the setting of the activity. This notion is called "situated knowledge" and it refers to the teacher's knowledge that is developed in the specific context of a classroom setting. This approach states a dialectical relationship between context and knowledge, since examining the nature of the environment of teachers will provide a better understanding of teaching.

The third approach does not only consider teacher knowledge as theoretical and practical, but also integrates knowledge of the subject matter acquired and how it influences their teaching. The process of transforming the subject matter into content of instruction encompasses experience and contextual knowledge. Hence, this approach presents a more complete understanding of what teacher knowledge is, because it considers the teacher's expertise in transforming subject knowledge to respond to problematic situations in particular settings by using pedagogical content knowledge to make a subject comprehensible to students.

Critical thinking

Ennis (1991) defines *critical thinking* as reasonable thinking to decide what to believe. Critical thinking includes sets of dispositions and abilities because both are necessary to become an ideal critical thinker.

Ennis (1996) defines *disposition* as a tendency to do something, to be open to alternatives. Therefore, a disposition is fundamental to develop abilities in critical thinking. This definition encompasses the criteria, dispositions and abilities of the ideal critical thinker, so its incorporation to a subject-matter area, as language teaching, is organized, detailed and easy to assess in many teaching situations. Ennis provides a conceptual framework to teach critical thinking so this concept can be reflected within the teaching practices to generate teacher knowledge.

From method to post-method

Kumaravadivelu (2005) presents three major concepts: language, learning and teaching. These concepts are analyzed considering theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics. For instance, language is defined from three vantage points: as a system, a discourse, and an ideology. Language as a system considers the system and subsystems from the language, e.g. phonology, semantics and syntax. Whereas language as a discourse refers to its use in the immediate social context. And language as an ideology is tied up to power and domination.

These concepts are related both to learning and teaching because the way how teachers look at language would permeate and conceptualize the teaching practices and the learning processes. For this reason, understanding the conversion of language input into learner output would differ if language was defined as a system, because the input would only consider the grammatical aspects of the language rather than its communicative functions. However, it is not enough to look at the language as a system and as a discourse; teachers should aim at integrating the three concepts of language and the learning theories, and subsequently their teaching practices will result in a meaningful and critical learning process.

Before describing the teaching practices mentioned above, this is what Kumaravadivelu (2005) explores in the learning theories: the connection between input, intake and second language (L2) development. Input is the corpus of the target language, which can be classified into three types: interlanguage input, i.e. the still-developing language of learners; simplified language, i.e. mostly the language from textbooks;

and non-simplified input, i.e. the language of competent speakers of the target language. Although there is a discussion of what is the best input, it is important to teach learners' strategies to process or intake any type of input.

As I have described above, language teaching is shaped by the concepts of language and learning. Therefore, teaching strategies to learners does not mean to teach the formal (or structural) properties of the language, but rather teaching cognitive capacities — such as metacognitive strategies — so that students become capable of identifying and applying them in different situations in which strategies would allow them to learn autonomously.

In this sense, learners are conscious of how the language works and how they can use its communicative functions to express their own ideas. And this is a major breakdown within language teaching, because learners should be able to express their thoughts, opinions and ideas in the target language considering their social, cultural, political and historical processes and practices of their very own native language and context. For this reason, Kumaravadivelu (2005) criticizes methods that do not allow the expression of the learners' voice with their own identity and consequently empower them to construct their own subjectivity. The post-method perspectives consider those factors because the teaching practices are not limited by procedures established by methods, but they are constructed with research of the educational setting and learners' needs and wants. However, it is important to understand the guiding principles of teaching methods before continuing with my reflection derived from my teaching practice.

Kumaravadivelu (2005) categorizes language teaching methods into language-centered methods, learner-centered methods, and learning-centered methods. As it is noticeable, these categories somehow match the concepts of language, learning and teaching described before. In this sense, there is a conceptual coherence in this summary and — subsequently — in the reflection from my own teaching experience. Language-centered methods focus on the linguistic form of the language; therefore, learning is a linear, additive process in explicit teaching procedures. Learner-centered methods stress the importance of the learners' needs, wants and situations following teaching practices that

aim at becoming learners grammatically accurate and communicatively fluent. Learning-centered methods pay attention to the cognitive processes of language learning. As a result, classroom procedures understand language development as a cyclical process which integrates all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), giving priority to meaning-focused activities.

In this section, I have discussed conceptions of reflective teaching, teacher's knowledge and critical thinking. Richards and Lockhart (1994) state that reflective teaching involves critical reflection to examine the teaching practices to implement strategies to change or improve. This approach is a continuous process and it serves to develop personal practical knowledge. Tsui (2003) analyzes personal practical knowledge, along with situated knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge as three different approaches to re-conceptualize teacher knowledge. Tsui (2003) states that teacher knowledge integrates the distinct knowledge domains, and its dialectical relationship with the world of practice permeates and is permeated by the context.

I have also discussed how language teaching has evolved from a prescriptive view of methods to a reflective approach to teaching in which methods are examined. Kumaravadivelu (2005) considers that language, learning and teaching are fundamental to conceptualize methods and language pedagogy. According to the author, language pedagogy should be based on an understanding of local linguistic, sociocultural and political particularities. The recognition of these particularities enables learners and teachers to shape their identity and to participate in social transformation.

Teaching experience

Considering the theoretical concepts and pedagogical precepts previously displayed and discussed, now I am going to reflect upon the current state of language teaching based on my own experience. When I started teaching English, I was worried about the grammar and vocabulary aspects of the language. Then, I was concerned about the communicative functions of the language. And now I am more aware of

the educational needs, but also of the students' interests in language learning today. Accordingly, at first I focused on the formal aspects of the language. Afterwards, I tried to use the language for communicative purposes. However, it is until now that I have reflected upon my teaching praxis, I have understood that language, learning and teaching are interrelated processes. Also, they involve several factors such as the socio-cultural context, and their functions do not limit communication but empower a voice in a foreign language.

In consequence, I have adopted a learner-centered approach to teaching, as I use my students' interests to plan my lessons, as well as using their daily lives to explain grammar features. Also, I started being aware of learning strategies, so I have explained and encouraged learners to use reading strategies, conversation strategies, among others. In adopting a learner-centered approach, I have examined the subject knowledge in terms of students' thinking and understanding. As a result, I have reflected on and established a dialectical relationship between subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge to improve the quality of my instruction and to make better curriculum decisions. This decision-making process has allowed me to develop some dispositions and abilities of critical thinking.

The dispositions of considering the total situation, being well informed and looking for alternatives, along with the abilities of inference, supposition and integration, have redefined my pedagogical content knowledge. These have allowed me to understand the context of the teaching act, to read, analyze and implement a variety of teaching strategies, and to respond to the specific context.

From my perspective, the educational needs of language teaching should consider language into these three aspects: form, meaning and function. But among the functions of language, one must prevail: Giving learners a voice and empowering them to be critical with the language input they process, and being able to use it to participate in socio-political actions. For instance, during the COVID-19 quarantines in 2020, I encouraged my intermediate students to participate in a forum proposed by *The New York Times*, in which they had to give their opinion about the national response to the pandemic. This is part of the learning network of the newspaper to provide students

with opportunities to express their opinion. This is not just a writing assignment with a communicative function (to give an opinion), but it is also a way to participate in a political discussion and, by doing so, to be able to have a critical point of view of what is happening in the world and how they can take action to change.

According to Paul and Elder (2014), becoming a critical thinker requires conscious commitment to learn because it is a gradual process of learning and practicing that happens over years. And it is even more difficult to teach learners to express critical thinking in a foreign language, as they still have a limited lexicon and grammar knowledge to make and defend any decision — this is a metacognitive ability of critical thinking proposed by Ennis (1991).

I have started explaining to students the vocabulary needed to express opinions in the target language. Then, I explained to them the components of an argument (premise and conclusion) so that their opinions become an argument by supporting facts and principles. Finally, they expressed their opinion about a particular topic of interest considering the reasons to support their arguments. I have used this sort of activity to break the ice at the beginning of my lessons, after watching or listening to a song or a topic that students have selected previously as a way to incorporate their tastes in my lessons, but also as a way to encourage them to discuss and present their ideas by considering and reasoning from premises and conclusions. This is a starting point for developing critical thinking in language teaching and provides an explicit emphasis on the domain knowledge in which the thinking occurs.

Suggestions

As mentioned above, teachers must consider the needs and interests of students before applying any type of learning strategy to develop critical thinking. By considering their needs, teachers address any linguistic difficulties to overcome them so that they do not interfere with the message they are trying to communicate. By taking learners' interests into account, teachers can motivate them to actively participate in discussions. By giving students the opportunity to express their views on

topics that interest them, we are not only giving them a real-life situation, but we are also recognizing active citizenship.

However, to implement critical thinking in the teaching practices is not enough, it is also necessary to incorporate meaningful learning experiences into the classroom practices. These experiences connect the learners' background knowledge and their own life experiences with the language input in the target language. If this knowledge and experience were taken into account in language learning, we would be able to deconstruct the idealization of native-like speakers, the standardized language and the mother tongue restriction that occurs in most language learning contexts, because they are pedagogical barriers that hamper the progress of any locally generated post-method pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2005).

I am not proposing a teaching approach in which several teaching principles are drawn without any connection. Instead, I am presenting insights on language teaching to encourage teachers to construct their own teaching practices based on their context and following a rigorous research process derived from reflecting, analyzing and implementing strategies to improve their practices. Also, they should consider the consistency between the concepts of language, learning and teaching, and the pedagogical precepts underlying their teaching practices.

From my very own experience, I consider that critical thinking in language teaching is mandatory, since we are raising language as a powerful feature today in order to participate in the transformation for equality and social justice on local and international level. And teachers benefit as well because they develop the set of dispositions and abilities to generate teacher knowledge.

This is an invitation to all language teachers to take a critical look at their practices and, if applicable, at the methods that underlie their instructional processes, so they reflect and construct their own teaching knowledge towards new pedagogical approaches of language teaching. The critical approach makes it possible to conceptualize teacher knowledge "as an organized whole, orienting the teacher to their situation and allowing them to act" (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, as cited in Tsui, 2003). Therefore, this kind of knowledge is situated and practical to the specific context of the classroom and is embodied in

teachers' classroom practices. Giving teachers the pedagogical power to legitimize their teacher knowledge and to grow awareness of the importance of local knowledge in the field of language.

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English for Significant Purposes as a Scenario to Educate for Citizenship

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As a Manner of Setting the Path. From Communicative Purposes to Citizenship

Teaching a language may be conceived as a set of practices, strategies, techniques and methods to guide learners into being fully competent users of a language. Based on this interpretation, language teaching may apparently pivot on two cornerstones: communicative competence and language proficiency. However, the fine line between language proficiency and communicative competence has progressively tended to be tougher to draw. As to communicative competence, Bagarić

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and Mihaljević-Djigunović highlight that the term is composed of two words whose combination means “competence to communicate” (2007). In this sense and within the framework of this paper, it is essential to understand the concept of human communication “as the process whereby one individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another individual (or group of individuals) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages” (Wrench et al., 2015, p. 27). Thus, teaching a language clearly implies taking the path to arouse signification, share and engender meaning, and ultimately build up social networks.

Consequently, it is clear that concepts such as language proficiency and communicative competence need to be expanded. In fact, various academicians (Byram, 1981, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1989; Byram & Morgan, 1994; Porto & Byram, 2015) have delved into the issue and inquired about the notion of intercultural citizenship within English lessons that emphasize on “dialogue, i.e. the ability to interact with and engage with other people and their views of the world” (Porto & Byram, 2015, p. 11). Bearing in mind the aforementioned, the *raison d’être* of any language is undergirded by notions such as being in contact, constructing together and taking care of one another. Hence, teaching a language is prone to turning into nourishing humanity with the vital elements to evolve to citizenship, to a human citizenship exerted in the current circumstances worldwide.

Citizenship may be viewed and conceived from various perspectives. According to Sherrod et al.: “Citizenship then has to involve multiple components” (2002, p. 265). In fact, citizenship deals with every aspect of human life and is deeply conditioned by a wide range of external factors. Hermes (2006) refers to Marshall and Bottomore’s (1950) tripartite definition of citizenship as a guide to its notion and nature. In the first place, it includes political and social rights. In this sense, I would dare to assert that citizenship also implies civic duties. Furthermore, citizenship alludes to “the common agreement among groups [within] the nation-state” (Hermes, 2006, p. 300), and there still exists a third strain which constrains citizenship to voting. In this regard, UNESCO may provide a more complete approach as it is perceived

from global citizenship education, and involves a three-folded perspective comprising cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral dimensions.

The cognitive dimension deals with acquiring “knowledge, understanding, and critical thinking about global, regional, national, and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations” (UNESCO, 2015, p.15). As for the socio-emotional dimension, it is understood as holding “a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity, and respect for differences and diversity” (UNESCO, 2015, p.15), and the behavioral dimension involves “[acting] effectively and responsibly at local, national, and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world” (UNESCO, 2015, p.15).

Bearing in mind the aforementioned constructs: “Education for citizenship equips people with the knowledge, skill, and understanding to play an effective role in public life. Citizenship encourages them to take an interest in topical and controversial issues and to engage in discussion and debate” (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2007, p. 27). To illustrate how education for citizenship and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) amalgamate, two approaches are presented as follows: 21st century skills and HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills).

21st century skills. Voogt and Pareja view the “21st century skills or 21st century competences as an overarching concept for the knowledge, skills and dispositions citizens need to be able to contribute to the knowledge society” (2010, p. 1). Within this perspective, education is envisioned in a more extensive manner and derives into life-long skills directly correlated with the cognitive, emotional and social realms of human life. In recent years, there has been too much talk of 21st century skills, and since 1956 the taxonomy of educational goals (Bloom’s taxonomy) was published and it has thrown light on how to excel education expectations and ensure significant learning. According to Dede, “classrooms today typically lack 21st century learning and teaching” (2010, p. 53). As a result, vital students’ abilities such as decision-making, knowledge transfer or teamwork are usually underrated.

The Glossary of Education Reform defines 21st century skills as “a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed [...] to be critically important to success in today’s

world, particularly in collegiate programs and contemporary careers and workplaces” (Great Schools Partnership, 2016). They range from critical thinking to health and wellness literacy. However, nowadays with the boom of digital tools applied for educational purposes, they tend to be underestimated. In this regard, Kay asserts that:

Many people equate technology-rich classrooms or modern schools or rigorous core subjects with 21st century learning, regardless of whether students are mastering 21st century skills. In reality, the ability to use digital devices in no way means that students know anything about global awareness or health literacy, learning and innovation skills, life and career skills, or even media literacy skills. Similarly, many educators claim that they already teach 21st century skills, even though these skills are not systemically infused into standards and assessments, curriculum and instruction, or professional development and learning environments. (2010, p. 28)

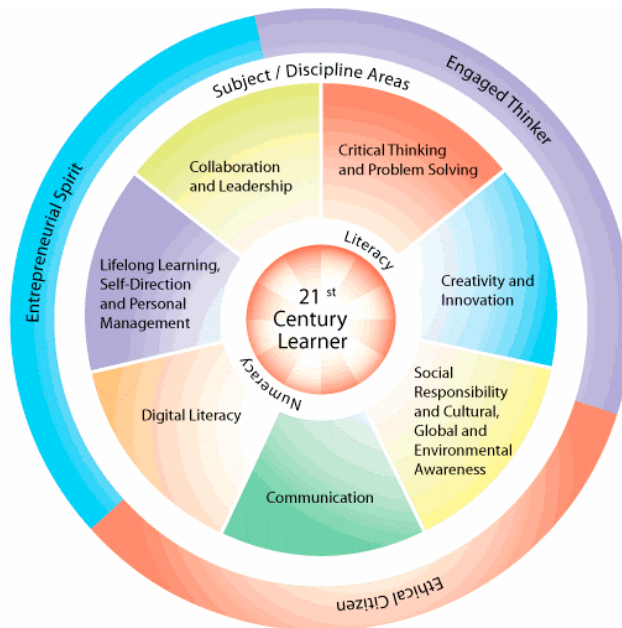


Figure 7.1 21st century skills

Source: Taken from Neelen & Kirschner (2016).

As it is displayed in Figure 7.1, those skills comprise a wide range of aspects ranging from critical thinking to collaboration and leadership, and their implications directly deal with social engagement under the current circumstances. In other words, being 21st century skillful implies playing an active role within society, and transcends mere digital literacy. Based on Figure 1, citizenship covers the integrality of the human being as it deals with being an engaged thinker who holds entrepreneurial capacities and ethical values.

Higher Order Thinking Skills. According to the Top Hat Glossary, HOTS “go beyond memorizing information or regurgitating stories [...] and emphasize the development of analytical skills” (n. d.). In fact, they pave the path to approach 21st century skills as analysis and criticality pervade educational goals nowadays. In this regard, Chen asserts that “language learning in higher education needs to go beyond the learning of the language itself [... Students should be encouraged to] go beyond surface meaning and to discover the deeper meaning with thinking skills instead of merely using basic literacy skills” (n. d., pp. 14-15). Thus, if students are expected to think higher, they necessarily should be exposed to predicaments, dilemmas and challenges which ignite HOTS. In other words, “HOTS can only be activated when individuals encounter unfamiliar problems that need to solve in a complex, non-routine and non-structured solution” (Mursyid & Kurniawati, 2019, p. 120).

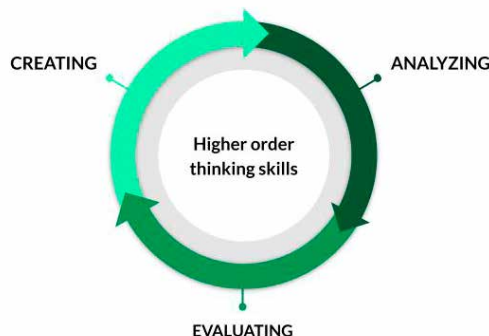


Figure 7.2. Higher Order Thinking Skills.

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 7.2 displays the interdependence of HOTS as they imply a gradual growth and development. In this regard, it is necessary to bear in mind that HOTS basis lays on LOTS (Lower Order Thinking Skills). The achievement of LOTS constitutes a step forward to HOTS. Thus, remembering, understanding and applying input set the path to engage in more elaborate thinking actions.

English for Significant Purposes (ESP). The acronym ESP is usually associated with English for Specific Purposes, however, in this case, ESP refers to English for Significant Purposes. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *significant* as “1. Large or important enough to have an effect or to be noticed, 2. Having a particular meaning, 3. Meaningful” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, 2010). This approach to TEFL that I would like to coin in this reflective paper adheres to connect English teaching and learning to a more transcendental view of life, and a more dynamic perspective of growing as a speaker of English as a foreign language. In this sense, learning a language transcends the mere gain of communicative competences, but also should contribute to configure the individual as whole and aid to situate him/her as a historical and political being.

As a Foretaste of Educating for Citizenship within Language Teaching Scenarios

When teaching a language aligns with non-traditional perspectives, it is plausible to contribute to forge better human beings. Thus, learning a language can be probably conceived as a self-determination to explore our inmost talents and abilities, and construct a path to scrap just being a still part of this world and epoch, and decide to actively partake in them.

In view of the preceding considerations, some steps have been made towards transcending the narrow and rote perspectives regarding what teaching a language comprises. Mayer (2002) presents an interesting

outlook on three different learning outcomes ranging from no learning and rote learning to meaningful learning — based on previous studies by Bransford et al. (1999) and Lamber and McCombs (1998). Mayer (2002) declares that meaningful learning entails to surpass factual knowledge and involve students in generating meaning. Besides, along the history of language instruction various approaches such as task-based language learning, cooperative learning and content-based instruction, among others, have heavily drawn on a sort of teaching oriented to foster meaningful learning.

Additionally, there are courses dedicated to respond to very particular needs, such as ESP (English for Specific Purposes). For instance, in tertiary level of education ESP courses can be considered as spawning grounds for language teaching in pursuance of citizenship as the core goal. Concerning the role of higher education in English learning, *English in Colombia: An Examination of Policy, Perceptions and Influencing Factors*, a research conducted by British Council-Colombia, declares: “In many ways, the role of higher education in English is that of an incentivizer: Higher education is seen by many as an opportunity and motivator for learning English. Graduates are expected to reach at least B1 level” (2015, p. 22). Hence, redefining ESP as English for Significant Purposes is a work of great relevance for encouraging a breakthrough in language teaching hand in hand with educating for citizenship. Planning an ESP course should hint at drawing on the wide range of acquired knowledge and expertise in their particular disciplinary area enrolled students must have. In this case, knowledge and expertise are the foundations to design inclusive and extensive pedagogical strategies aiming to nurture citizenship features.

Therefore, with the aim of bolstering a shift towards uplifting language lessons, and having as a reference point ESP courses understood as scenarios oriented to English for Significant Purposes, I propose a list of features which should typify, in an ampler sense, language teaching practices founded on communicative goals embedded with citizenship backbones.

Table 7.1 Features of an ESP lesson founded on communicative goals embedded with citizenship backbones

Feature	Description
Encompassing	Embracing multiple variables which may affect learning and teaching.
Sensible-oriented	Involving students in high order thinking activities.
Transcendental	Nurturing creativity, imagination and the pursuit of happiness.
Fair	Preparing students to assist rather than compete.
Human	Guiding students to be better persons and responsible citizens.
Rewarding	Making students remarkably avail themselves of their own talents
Memorable	Engaging students in learning for life experiences instead of learning for being tested.
Communicative	Favoring collaborative and cooperative work.
Meaningful	Correlating students' needs and interests with current issues which demand a variant approach.
Intriguing	Aiming to augment questioning and amazement.

Source: Own elaboration.

Now, when it comes to self-assessment of our teaching performance, it is advisable to wonder to what extent our current pedagogical practices are aligned to the previous characterization, how we can drive similar initiatives in the institution we are working at, and what other features may be added to the ones presented in this paper.

As a Guide to Illustrate how ESP Courses May Become Scenarios to Educate for Citizenship

As follows, a lesson plan is displayed so as to concretize how the aforementioned constructs and ideas merge with the aim of educating for citizenship within English lessons. The lesson is adjusted to the following pedagogical cycle:

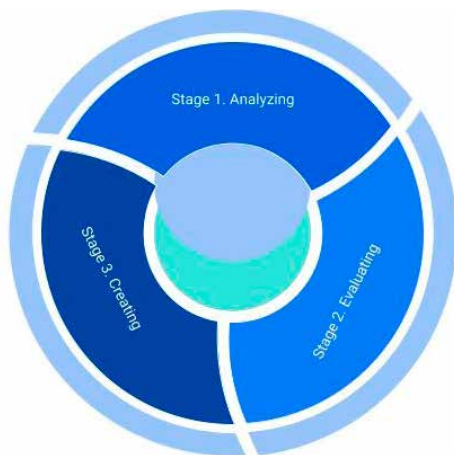


Figure 7.3 Pedagogical cycle

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 7.2 Lesson details

Materials	Worksheet, one YouTube video
Audience	Adult (+18) Intermediate English students
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Learn specific vocabulary related to human rights ✓ Participate in appropriate classroom discussions ✓ Do listening comprehension exercises ✓ Propose and justify some changes to the e current Universal Human Rights Declaration
Outcomes	Students will become acquainted with some issues concerning human rights nowadays and take a position toward them.
Duration	Times vary based on contextual circumstances and proficiency levels. Approximately 2 hours for stages 1 and 2, and 2 hours for stage 3.

Source: Own elaboration.

First Stage. Analyzing

Students will get involved in two activities intended to foster their analysis skills. First, they will connect and relate ideas. To do so, they will

observe an illustration about human rights and express their ideas in terms of how human rights are concretized on a daily basis.



Figure 7.4 Connecting and relating ideas

Source: Own elaboration.

Afterward, students are expected to select one human right and provide more detailed information about it bearing in mind the following chart. As soon as they fill in the chart with the information requested, they should speak and illustrate the whole class about the right selected.

Table 7.3 Illustrating

Human right:		
Description	Plausible infringements	Mechanisms to safeguard it

Source: Own elaboration.

Second Stage. Evaluating

The second stage will be entirely devoted to listening. Thus, students will watch a YouTube video that displays information about human rights. First, they will fill in some blanks. Afterwards, they are expected to resolve some listening comprehension questions.

SECOND STAGE (Evaluating)

1. DECIDING

Watch the video entitled WHAT ARE THE HUMAN RIGHTS? and fill in the blanks.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDgIVseTkuE&t=2s>

The idea of human rights is that each of us no 1. _____ who we are or where we are born is 2. _____ to the same basic rights and freedoms. Human rights can't be granted or 3. _____. They are inalienable and universal. The history behind human rights is a long one. Throughout the 4. _____ and across societies, religions and cultures, we have 5. _____ with defining notions of rightfulness, justice and rights. But one of the most modern affirmations of human rights emerged from the 6. _____ of World War II with the creation of the United Nations. The 7. _____ that established the UN gives as one of its purposes to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, and with the same spirit in 1948, the UN General Assembly 8. _____ the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. Answer the following listening comprehension questions.

Figure 7.5 Listening comprehension.

Source: Own elaboration.

Third Stage. Creating

During the final stage, students will work on a collaborative activity. They should select one of the activities proposed and make the corresponding oral report:

- a. Make some modifications to the current Declaration of Human Rights and provide the grounds for them in terms of cases, facts, studies, and so on.
- b. Make a list of human rights infringements which are not commonly taken into account.

- c. Make a list of current concerns alleged as rights, but in fact they are not.

In this stage, students are expected to display their criticality concerning human rights, justify their decisions and defend their ideas based on sound and clear arguments.

As a Manner to Further Make the Way

The previous lesson plan gives an account of a simple way to embed a wide range of learning objectives within a unique scenario: the ESP lessons. In the sample provided, students are prompted to think critically, communicate, work collaboratively and innovate while they are taking part in activities designed to foster the in-tandem development of communicative and higher thinking skills along with citizenship. In this case, citizenship is nurtured by raising students' awareness of the current state of affairs concerning human rights and the inherent social responsibility to get acquainted with them beyond the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as they should be exerted and safeguarded within real contexts.

The present paper intended to illustrate how ESP lessons may transcend from specific matters to significant issues. Consequently, a set of theoretical constructs was presented and finely integrated so that students become acquainted with some issues concerning human rights nowadays and take a position toward them. Concerning the list of features for ESP courses, the lesson plan outlined above fulfills the objective of raising questions among students. Furthermore, it provides students with opportunities to make correlations, work collaboratively, take advantage of their own capacities and engage in learning for life. In this sense, the pedagogical cycle founded on HOTS may be adapted to various topics as a manner to enrich language instruction and learning.

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Teaching English nowadays is not only about grammar and vocabulary explanations but also about the use of attractive methodologies to capture my students' attention. When I was a high school student, my English and Spanish classes were separated from my technology classes. Now, the technological component is crucial in the way I teach languages to my students. Every day I look for new resources and use different methodologies to instruct my language learners in what is required for their learning process by showing interesting and current topics.

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I Dare You to Accept the 'Vocabulary Challenge'

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Introduction

When acquiring a new language, vocabulary plays a key role and it is a never-ending process. It is important for us, as teachers, to be aware of our students' needs in order to select the vocabulary in accordance with those needs. Through this lesson, as a teacher you can not just introduce technical vocabulary related to your students' professional field and real-life situations, you also have to give them entertaining learning strategies to acquire any type of vocabulary they want to learn. Moving from one phase to another, students will be exposed to different activities aimed mainly at vocabulary acquisition; furthermore, they will develop the four language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. In that way, you will find a complete lesson to be developed in virtual classes or adapted to the classroom.

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Table 8.1 Lesson details.

Level	Upper Intermediate and above
Time Required	12 sessions of two hours each (approximately two sessions per phase)
Goals	To expand vocabulary knowledge related to the students' professional field. To be able to use contextualized vocabulary. To use English language efficiently for personal or academic purposes. To guide the students in six phases by means of gradual tasks supported by didactic online tools and scaffolding in order to have a long-term learning of vocabulary in an entertaining way.
Materials	Internet service, educational tools and websites, flashcards, camera.

Source: Own elaboration.

Background

The Vocabulary Challenge project emerged some semesters ago from my experience as an English teacher at a private university in Colombia. The idea was born due to the need to think, adapt and apply different strategies and methodologies for students to learn vocabulary in English. I could observe that some of my students wanted to learn vocabulary related to their careers because in their previous levels of learning English, they were in a vicious circle of learning only general vocabulary that was sometimes decontextualized and did not contribute to increasing their motivation to learn English. Overall, I wanted to challenge my students to learn and consolidate career-focused vocabulary by using different tools that could help them on their learning path, so that they could feel motivated to learn English.

In the procedure, I will describe all the tasks performed for the Vocabulary Challenge for upper-intermediate students taking their last levels of English (seventh – Legal 1). In the context in which this challenge was conducted, university students take six levels of general English in their syllabus, one per semester with an intensity of four

hours per week. There is an exception with Law students, who take seven levels of general English with an intensity of six hours per week. Also, when these students approve these levels of general English, they must take two more levels of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) with two hours per week. Students had a different background regarding vocabulary. The above situation could be observed because when they were exposed to listening or reading activities of their academic English level, they ignored some vocabulary that I as a teacher assumed they knew, so the Vocabulary Challenge activity sought an approach for them to learn vocabulary related to their professional field, in this case Law.

Preparation

This activity is proposed to be developed in six phases during twelve sessions of two hours each or according to the syllabus of the level of English you are teaching. In each phase, there is a set of activities or tasks that you and your students must accomplish to complete the vocabulary challenge, which are explained in detail below. Also, websites and other resources are referenced in each phase but you can also find the links in the reference list.

Procedure

First Phase. Brainstorm of Types of Law!

Goal: To have a first approach to technical vocabulary related to the types of Law through the tools Poll Everywhere and Word Art.

The students will have a general approach to the vocabulary related to their field, Law. As a warm up, tell your students they are going to participate in a word cloud poll using the dynamic online polling platform Poll Everywhere to explore their prior knowledge about the topic 'Classification of Law.' In that way:

- a. Open the platform Poll Everywhere, select the blank activity Word Cloud and propose an open question in the title section (e.g. What types of Law do you know? What types of Law are there in the legal system of your country?). Then, invite your students to access the poll from their cellphones or a different electronic device and to participate by writing their answers.



Figure 8.1 Personal file. Screenshot activity Word Cloud Poll Everywhere. Phase 1

Source: Own elaboration.

- b. After the poll activity on the platform, you can also ask students more questions for them to give a more elaborated answer defending their choice (e.g. From those types of Law, what branch would you like to specialize in? Why would you like to specialize in that branch?). In case that you as a teacher want to have information about this topic, please visit the website of the Rasmussen College (Brooks, 2019.)
- c. Ask your students to get together in groups according to the type of Law they have selected, to do collaborative work and to create a word cloud related to that field. Suggest them to use an art creator like Word Art that enables them to create unique electronic images that show the words selected.
- d. Finally, invite your students to exchange their word clouds among all the groups and become familiar with this vocabulary.



Figure 8.2 Personal file. Screenshot students’ activity Word Art. Phase 1.

Source: Own elaboration.

Second Phase. Be Ready for a Job Interview!

Goal: To be prepared for a role play job interview using formal and accurate language.

Students will learn how to prepare and attend a job interview and, at the same time, they will practice the vocabulary they learned in the first phase of the challenge.

- a. To begin, start the class with a general discussion, asking students, ‘What are some tips to have a good job interview?’ Elicit a few responses from different students.
- b. Next, propose some questions that can possibly come up in a job interview: ‘What do you think are the main challenges of the legal career in the next few years? How would you respond to change? Why do you want to work in the legal field? Ask students how would they answer to the interviewer.
- c. Previously, share a document with the students that contains examples of possible questions that can be observed in a job interview. Ask them to review that file and get familiarized with

the structure of the questions and the content. Likewise, suggest them to answer these questions by writing and have them ready for the next step.

- d. Suggest the students to get together in groups of two or three people for this task. Direct them to design a role play to recreate a creative job interview (suggested time for the presentation: three minutes). They will focus the interview on the law branch they want to specialize in (e.g. Family, Tort, Criminal, Business Law and others), and each member of the group will select the role they are going to perform — interviewer or interviewee.
- e. Finally, give the students a couple of days to prepare the activity and present it to the class in a virtual synchronous session. You can also ask them to record a video and upload it to a Google Drive, university platform or any online platform you suggest. Do not forget to provide the students with complete feedback for this activity.

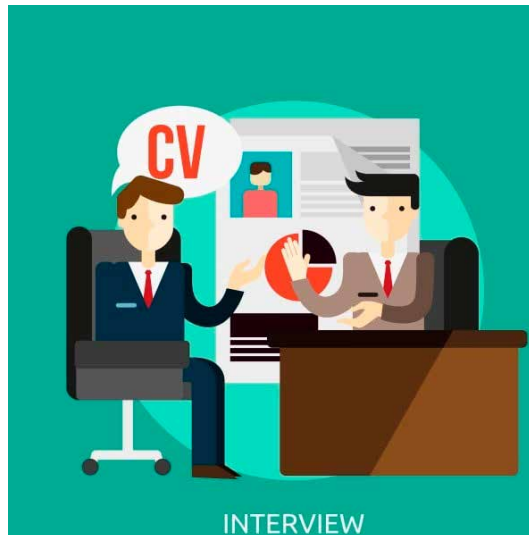


Figure 8.3 Personal file. Screenshot students' activity Word Art. Phase 1

Source: Own elaboration.

Third phase. Death Penalty around the World!

Goal: To be able to provide arguments in English related to death penalty.

For this phase, use the worksheet "Amnesty Death Penalty Report" available at the platform islcollective.com as a guide to work on the crime, law and punishment topics, and to improve students' vocabulary and listening skills, following the next steps:

- a. To start, you should have already created a 'Hangman' with an online resource such as Hangmanwords to identify key words linked to the topic of death penalty (e.g. execution, lethal injection, punishment, legalized killing, among others). Share the link of the hangman with the students for them to discover the vocabulary.

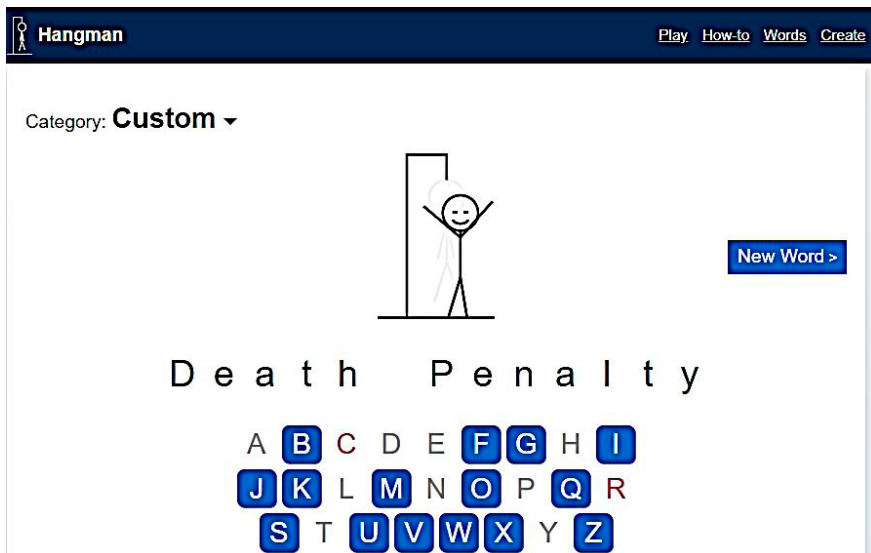


Figure 8.4 Personal file. Screenshot students' activity Hangman. Phase 3.

Source: Own elaboration.

- b. Ask students to do the first part of the worksheet “Amnesty Death Penalty Report” “Pre-watching activity”. They have to complete ten sentences with the corresponding vocabulary. In this part of the activity, invite the students to discover the type of word (noun, adjective, verb) and the pronunciation that matches the sentence, and to become aware of the meaning in Spanish and how a word can have different connotations according to the context.
- c. Tell students they are going to do the second part of the worksheet “Amnesty Death Penalty Report” “Watch”. They have to watch the video *A Disturbing Statistic — Global Executions Hit 25 Year High* and answer some True-False questions, which can be presented in the university online learning platform or in any other suggested online resource. In this case, we used Moodle to create this activity. Furthermore, students should identify the vocabulary studied in the first section of the worksheet.
- d. Have a discussion with your students to elicit their points of view about this topic, ask them, “As future lawyers, would you support death penalty as a legal way to punish someone? What do you think about lethal injection? Would you support death penalty laws for our country (Colombia)?”
- e. All these previous tasks involving phase three are intertwined with the objective of deepening students’ understanding of the death penalty topic, and also for them to be able to provide sound arguments in English. Similarly, it is recommended that the information given by students is contextualized in relation to the laws of the country they live in. Likewise, students can compare the different death penalty laws around the world.

Amnesty Death Penalty Report

A. Pre-watching. Complete each of these sentences with a suitable word from the following (in the correct form).

execute (v)	massacre (n)	prolific (adj)	moratorium (n)	grim (adj)	convict
(v)	offence (n)	safeguard (v)	dissident (n)	abolish (v)	

- 1 The government has called for a on weapons testing.
- 2 The guard was of second-degree murder and served five years in prison.
- 3 His brother had no criminal convictions apart from a few traffic
- 4 The artist made more than 800 recordings over the course of his career.
- 5 Many so-called heretics were in this square over several hundred years.
- 6 We came to the United States from Ireland long after slavery had been
- 7 The left 12 people dead, dozens injured and a nation in stunned sorrow.
- 8 About 3,000 political disappeared during the dictatorship, according to official figures.
- 9 When the news was confirmed, she ran to the bathroom and wept.
- 10 Most European countries have data protection laws to people's privacy.

B. Watch the video and decide whether the following statements are true or false. Write T for True or F for False. <http://tinyurl.com/het2o5> or

- 1 Amnesty International's latest report is disturbing to read.
- 2 The number of the people executed last year is the highest in 50 years.
- 3 China is one of the three countries that are responsible for almost all executions.
- 4 It is thought that China is responsible for the biggest number of executions worldwide.
- 5 No one knows exactly how many people have been put to death in China.
- 6 Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are responsible for more than 90% of all the executions recorded in 2015.
- 7 In Pakistan executions had been stopped before the Peshawar school massacre.
- 8 According to Amnesty International many of those who were put to death were terrorists.
- 9 According to Amnesty International Saudi Arabia is using the death penalty to defeat political opponents.
- 10 28 executions have been recorded in the USA since 1991.

<http://getit>

Figure 8.5 Screenshot worksheet “Amnesty Death Penalty Report.” Phase 3.
Source: Own elaboration.

Fourth phase. Into Criminal Law!

Goal: To expose students to Criminal Law vocabulary in order for them to be able to give a creative oral presentation related to the solution of one social or criminal problem.

- a. To begin, tell the students they are going to participate in a Kahoot activity ‘How much do you know about criminal law?’ They will be able to identify and classify the types of crimes, for example, if the crime is against people, property or a victimless crime (e.g. kidnapping equals crime against people).

In the same way, they can relate stages of legal processes (e.g. going to jail, pleading guilty or not, getting fingerprinted, hearing witness testimony).

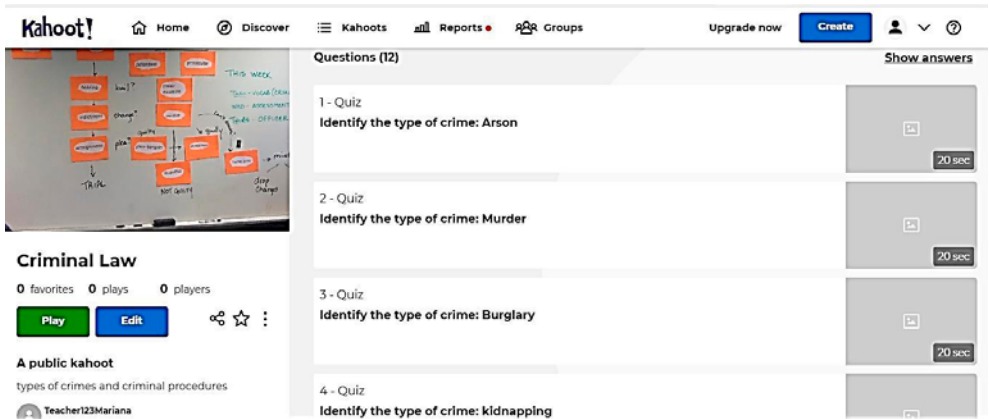


Figure 8.6 Personal file. Screenshot Kahoot activity “How much do you know about criminal law?” Phase 4

Source: Own elaboration.

- b. Based on the lesson “What’s the crime?” (ESL Library, 2007, p. 7) from the e-book *Living in English: Law and Order*, design a crossword for your students to solve, it must be related to Criminal Law vocabulary and to students’ real context. The suggested online resource for designing the crossword is When We Cross Words.

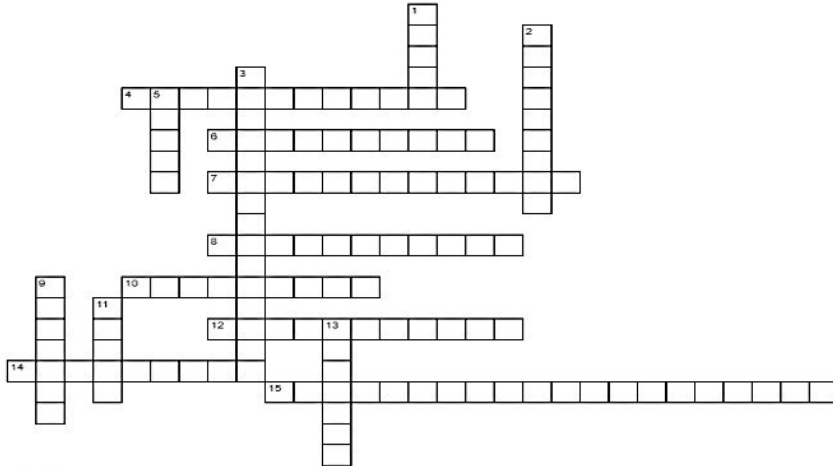
I DARE YOU TO ACCEPT THE 'VOCABULARY CHALLENGE'



SANTO TOMÁS UNIVERSITY (VILLAVICENCIO)
LAW – CRIME VOCABULARY
ENGLISH VII (D7C)

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Read the following situations and decide which crime each person was charged with. *Read the following quotations and decide who is speaking.



Designed by: Teacher *Mariana González*

<http://www.whenwecrosswords.com/>

Figure 8.7 Personal file. Screenshot Crossword Law-Crime. Phase 4

Source: Own elaboration.

Across

- 4 When John punched the man in the face, the man fell down and hit his head on the sidewalk and died. Bart was charged with **Manslaughter**.
- 6 *'I'm going to prove to you that the defendant is guilty of this crime.' **Prosecutor**
- 7 The man hit his wife so hard she ended up in the hospital. He was charged with **Domestic Abuse**.
- 8 Patrick stuffed three shirts into his large handbag and left the store without paying for the items. He was charged with **Shoplifting**.
- 10 The two men used guns and knives to force the pilot to land the plane. They were charged with **Hijacking**.
- 12 *'We find the defendant not guilty.' **Jury Foreman**
- 14 *'I plead not guilty?' **Defendant**
- 15 *'You were driving 30 miles an hour over the speed limit.' **Highway Patrol Officer**

Down

- 1 *'Bail is set at \$10,000.' **Judge**
- 2 Charles broke two windows of his neighbors' house and threw eggs at the garage door. He was charged with **Vandalism**.
- 3 *'All rise'. **Clerk of the Court**
- 5 The men deliberately started the fire by pouring gasoline all over the boxes and then lighting a match. The men were charged with **Arson**.
- 9 *'Call 911! I just saw someone running out of the bank with a gun.' **Witness**
- 11 *'This is a stick-up! Empty the cash register and put all the money in this bag.' **Thief**
- 13 Michael signed someone else's name on several checks and then cashed them at the bank. He was charged with **Forgery**.

Figure 8.8 Personal file. Screenshot Crossword Law-Crime. Phase 4

Source: Own elaboration.

- c. After solving the crossword, the whole class will share their answers in a synchronous session. Invite students to clarify doubts about vocabulary and their corresponding definitions. Also, invite students to practice the key vocabulary pronunciation in the class session using resources as YouTube, where they can look for the pronunciation of the words that they are having trouble with.
- d. In this step, the resource that students must use is Edpuzzle. This tool allows you as a teacher to create or adapt videos with inserted questions that students must answer while watching them. Bearing in mind the students' needs and vocabulary, adapt the video-lesson *Crime and Social Problems* in the platform Edpuzzle. Tell students they have to observe the video and answer the questions. The resource Edpuzzle allows you to keep track of each student's performance.

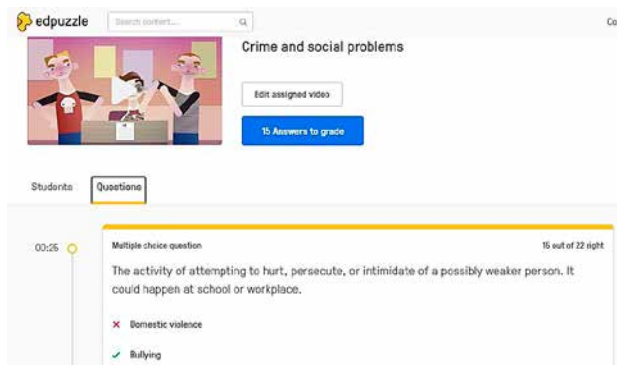


Figure 8.9 Personal File. Screenshot Edpuzzle Activity 'Crime and Social Problems.' Phase 4

Source: Own elaboration.

- e. Subsequently, in groups, students will choose one crime or social problem that affects their country and prepare a creative oral presentation with a possible solution to that problem. The presentation can be done in a synchronous session or through a video.

Fifth Phase. One Step Closer for the Vocabulary Challenge!

Goal: To acquire vocabulary of crime and punishment to develop an argumentative writing activity.

Make a compilation of the students’ vocabulary with a list of 50 words in English related to the legal field that the students have been learning about crime and punishment, with their definitions in English and also the word in Spanish. Give students that list in order for them to have a better appropriation of these concepts. On the vocabulary list, the words should be specified regarding a part of speech, if the word is a noun, verb or adjective.



LAW VOCABULARY COMPLETE COMPILATION
LAW VII (2020-1)
SANTO TOMÁS UNIVERSITY (VILLAVICENCIO)

- Please, study and internalize each concept in English and Spanish for the *Vocabulary Challenge*.

ENGLISH	CONCEPT/SPANISH
LAW	‘The law is a system of rules that a society or government develops in order to deal with crime, business agreements, and social relationships. You can also use the law to refer to the people who work in this system.’ ¹
1. Abrogate	Revocar, anular
2. Abduction	Rapto
3. Appeal	Apelación/Apelar
4. Acquit	Absolver
5. Acquittal	Absolución, fallo absolutorio
6. Act of God	Fuerza mayor
7. Arson	Incendio provocado
8. Arrest	Arresto/Arrestar
9. Attorney/Barrister/Lawyer/Solicitor	Abogado
10. Bail	Fianza, caución
11. Binding	Vinculante
12. Blackmail	Chantaje, extorsión
13. Breach	Quebrantamiento
14. Brief	Compendio/informe
15. Case	Caso
16. Claimant	Demandante
17. Clerk of the Court	Secretario Judicial
18. Commit	Cometer
19. Contempt	Desacato
20. Contract	Acuerdo
21. Convict	Condenado, condenar
22. Conviction	Condena, fallo condenatorio

¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/law>

Compilation made by: Teacher *Mariana González*

Figure 8.10 Personal file. Screenshot compilation of law vocabulary. Phase 5
 Source: Own elaboration.

- a. Give students some writing prompts for them to participate in an argumentative writing activity, individually or in groups, related to the topic of crime and punishment. Some examples of questions that you can ask your students are the following: “What is the most dangerous crime in your country or region? Do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the death penalty in the laws of your country? What law would you implement in the laws of your country to reduce the crime rates?” Following this inquiry, you can provide tutoring to each student or group to suggest corrections regarding writing style and the provided answers. At the end of this activity, the writings will be shared with all the group of students in a discussion forum through the university platform. The students will give their opinions and contributions about their classmates’ writings. With this activity, students can practice the vocabulary they are learning connected to their ideas and opinions. In the same way, they are reinforcing writing rules.

Sixth Phase. The Vocabulary Challenge!

Goal: To take the Vocabulary Challenge and present it by means of a video recording.

This is one of the most important steps, tell your students that they are invited to participate in a Vocabulary Challenge. It consists of learning the vocabulary that they received previously, but bearing in mind the time limit for this challenge. Explain the students that they have to study and learn the set of words, and then record a video of themselves mentioning the words one by one in English and Spanish. The video must last no more than two minutes. The three students that accomplish this challenge in the shortest amount of time will earn an extra reward on their grade of the final term.

- a. Tell your students to study and practice the vocabulary before the challenge. As the lesson is intended to be virtual, the students have to record a two-minute length video. The aspects that will be evaluated in the assessment rubric are pronunciation and

accuracy. Each word must be pronounced correctly in English and accurately related to its meaning in Spanish.

- b. Design a set of flashcards using the website Quizlet to consolidate the vocabulary learning. In this website, there are useful tabs which will allow your students to have a deeper practice of the vocabulary, such as a live game which can be played in real time with all your group of students to assess their progress while studying vocabulary.
- c. In advance, record a video tutorial to show students step-by-step how they should record their own videos and important features to remember, such as pronunciation and accuracy. Also, students should follow key steps when recording: To shuffle the cards, to record horizontally in case of using cellphones, and to allow the viewer to see the flashcards and students' faces, which means that the recording must be done from the left or right side angle. It is important to clarify to students that the time limit is two minutes. .



Figure 8.11 Personal file. Screenshot teacher's video tutorial. Phase 6

Source: Own elaboration.

- d. In the last class session, before the deadline, have a final practice in which students challenge themselves in real time. For example, Student 1 shows some flashcards on the camera and Student 2 should say the word in English and Spanish. In the same way, students can practice pronunciation and speed when saying the words.
- e. Lastly, each student uploads the video to the university platform to complete the Vocabulary Challenge and to be assessed by the teacher.
- f. Close the activity providing students with complete feedback orally or by writing. In addition, ask them spontaneously about feedback for the activity and what can be done to improve the lesson in the future.
- g. This final phase shows the learners' apprehension of vocabulary in terms of pronunciation and meaning. It is the result of the process carried out in the previous phases, in which there has been a diverse exposure to different activities that have helped students to reinforce the four skills — listening, reading, writing and speaking. All of the above, having vocabulary at the core of all the activities.



Figure 8.12 Personal file. Screenshot student's video
“Vocabulary Challenge Activity.” Phase 6

Source: Own elaboration.

Variation

The Vocabulary Challenge lesson can be adapted according to your curriculum objectives and applied to any level of English learning due to the flexibility of the resources, as well as different topics and vocabulary. This lesson was described to be used online because of the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic that we as teachers and students are living with virtual education, but it also can be adapted to a regular classroom context.

Final Reflection

Undergraduate students need to prepare themselves for their future work life where learning and knowing a foreign language is a must, but learning it in context is a plus. We as teachers should be the guide

that provides students teaching the language that they need. With this lesson, students acquired academic and legal vocabulary and they practiced it through different tasks focused on improving all language skills. Simultaneously, as a teacher I combined a diverse set of online resources that made them feel challenged with their classmates. During all the phases, students worked very hard to achieve each one of the objectives of the tasks, but also to have the motivation to meet the challenge. I could notice that the students liked to feel the competition and to compete with their classmates, and almost without realizing it, they were advancing in their language learning process.

As in every process, everything needs to be done step by step in order to get results. At the beginning of the fourth phase, some students felt a bit anxious and concerned because of the challenge, they felt they were not going to be able to make it, but at the end of the challenge, they felt very proud of themselves because all the group worked on the diverse tasks, met the challenge and obtained very good qualitative and quantitative learning results. The three students who obtained the best scores on time and given parameters according to the rubric got extra credits on their final score of the final term of the course. Some comments from the students' feedback were that they liked the activity because it was challenging, productive and interesting.

On the one hand, it was challenging because students had never been involved in any similar activity, it helped them to develop their memory and work all language skills as a whole. On the other hand, they found the activity productive because they learned many words and concepts, which is helpful for their academic and work context. Finally, students pointed out that the activity was interesting because they did not memorize the vocabulary with its meaning, but they could really learn the words in a real context, which will make them difficult to forget, as usually happens on traditional vocabulary learning activities in which students cannot remember what they learned.

A final suggestion for teachers to optimize time to plan and conduct the lesson properly is to organize in advance the activities for each stage and to become familiar with the online resources that are needed to complete the tasks. Therefore, you can certainly know the time you need to develop each phase and the activities will be carried out

properly. The suggested time that I give in this lesson is a proposal because I planned it according to the syllabus of the course, lesson plan, number of sessions, number of students in the group and the available technological resources. In that way, you can be flexible with time and adapt it to your context. In conclusion, be creative, organized, and the most important aspect, always bear in mind your students' needs. If you do it this way, you and your students will enjoy the process together and get the most of this lesson.

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2021

This compilatory book gives account of a series of topics that have become into inquiry endeavors, pedagogical challenges and research questions for a group of ELT women. In this sense, the reader will have the opportunity to delve into current challenges concerning Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).



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